Chronicles

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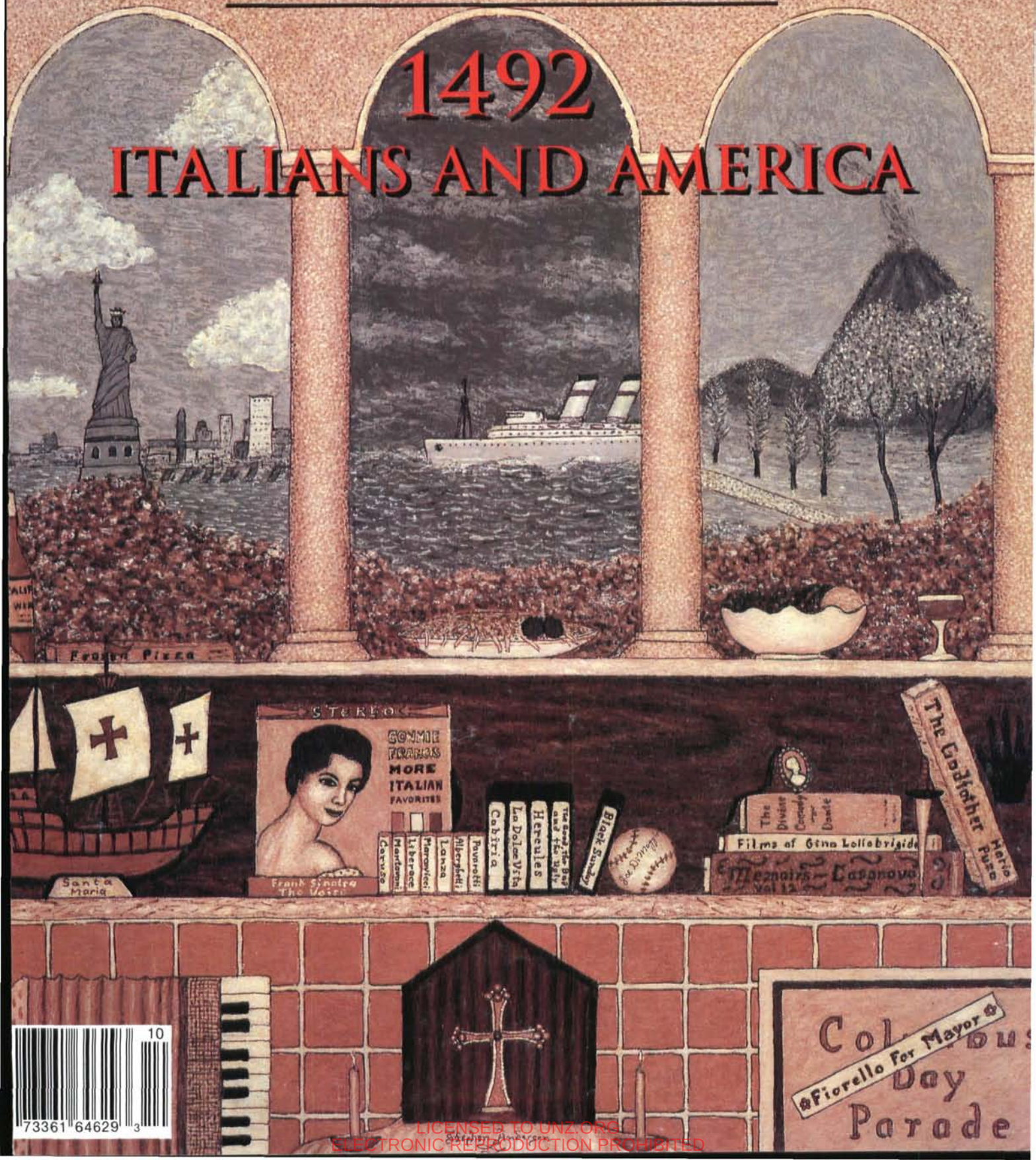
ITALIANS AND AMERICA



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Orthodox Catholics: DON'T DESPAIR!

Anne Roche Muggeridge, daughter-in-law of convert Malcolm Muggeridge, has said in her recent book, *The Desolate City: Revolution in the Catholic Church* (Harper & Row): "Because the integrity of its message has been betrayed, the Catholic Church is in ruins. Yet even now there are converts, of exceptionally high quality, and their number is increasing with the tenure of the present Pope. Catholics watched with a mixture of pity and amusement as the excellent Anglo-Catholic *New Oxford Review* argued and agonized itself into the [Roman] Catholic Church. I know a substantial number of recent converts like this and am much edified by their purity and ardour. Seven of them are my godchildren, and I must confess that some of us, to our shame, earnestly tried to delay them, on the grounds of the growing disorder in the Catholic Church. They forced their way past us anyway, thank God. They come because at the highest level of Catholic teaching, the doctrine of the faith, though much embattled, remains uncompromised and is as fearlessly proclaimed by John Paul II as by Peter, Paul, Ignatius, or Augustine. These new Catholics and the extraordinary Pope to whom they belong are a very present comfort when one is tempted to despair."

Over the last quarter century, the number of converts to Roman Catholicism slowed to a trickle. But now, a new wave of converts is entering the Church. What's more, contrary to the shibboleth that Catholicism is a superstitious religion for the ignorant, an unusually high proportion of the new Catholics consists of writers and intellectuals. Among them, it may be hoped, is another Chesterton, another Maritain, another Newman, another Ronald Knox, another Dorothy Day, another Gerard Manley Hopkins, another Edith Stein — converts all.

The new converts are not attracted to the diluted Catholicism of the Hans Kungs, the Charles Currans, or those who sign ads favoring legal abortion. No, they are attracted by the Catholicism of the ages, the Magisterium, and the inspiring leadership of the current Pope.

The forum for the new generation of converts is the NEW OXFORD REVIEW, a monthly magazine that takes its name from the 19th-century Oxford Movement in England. Today there is a new Oxford Movement afoot in America. Among the converts to Roman Catholicism who have written for the REVIEW are Sheldon Vanauken, John C. Cort, Walker Percy, L. Brent Bozell, Avery Dulles, and Peter Kreeft. But the REVIEW isn't just for converts. Most of our writers are cradle Catholics and a significant minority belongs to various other churches. Amazingly, while the REVIEW is a lightning rod for "papist" pilgrims, it is also ecumenical in spirit. And we cover the full range of issues of concern to today's reflective and believing Christians, including the quest for a more just and compassionate society.

If you want to recapture the excitement of when you first really believed, if you feel inundated by "bad news" about the Church, if you despair of all the moral laxity and doubt and dissension within her portals but seek a remedy for that despair, or if you're searching for a "face" of Catholicism that is spiritually vibrant, solidly prolife, doctrinally sound, and socially engaged, it's time for you to subscribe to the NEW OXFORD REVIEW!

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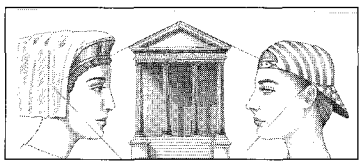

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A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE

Vol. 16, No. 10 October 1992

On the 'Dead Sea Scrolls'

Jacob Neusner's otherwise entertaining report on the Dead Sea Scrolls fiasco (Cultural Revolutions, April 1992) is marred by the aside that "Christianity, like every other great religion, rests not on historical facts but supernatural revelation. . . ."

This ugly little pronunciamento (made just in time for Lent) is about what one would expect of an academic scholar of religion these days. For such and their ilk religion is only a human creation, and gods, angels, demons, and Satan, even God himself, are at best quaint ideas. Accordingly, the supernatural does not overturn the laws of time and space in the form of miracles, for example. All it does, if it exists at all, is impact the human psyche.

It would be nice for a change to see an academic of the stature of Dr. Neusner take seriously the documentary evidence of St. Paul or St. John, both of whom were at pains to make the contrary point, and especially that the historicity of this mattered, and mattered absolutely. But I suppose this would be asking too much of a profession devoted to the homogenization of religion.

—John S. Meyer
Roselle, IL

Roving eyes should have stumbled over Jacob Neusner's second, pivotal paragraph in his April 1992 editorial. The rub between my orthodoxy and his liberal heresy sparked this revision: "Christianity [is not] like every other great religion, [it] rests on historical fact [and] supernatural revelation. . . . Christianity was [proven] on the first Easter, when [Jesus Christ] arose from the grave [fulfilling Jewish prophecy and changing the course of humanity]." A fragment from a cave is further evidence that supernatural faith is based upon historical fact.

—Mark S. Zuelke
Fox River Grove, IL

Dr. Neusner Replies:

The sentence to which both correspondents appear to take exception simply restates what I take to be standard Christian doctrine. As to Mr. Zuelke's statement, I honestly don't know what he's talking about. Mr. Meyer and I probably do not differ, since I propose to deny not historical facticity but the relevance of historical inquiry. All religions that appeal to revelation take for granted the historicity of the stories told in revelation. That has no bearing on this matter. The point I wished to make is that the premise of religious faith in no way opens the door for ordinary historical study to stand in judgment upon extraordinary theological conviction. It is time, after the long, black dominion of historicism, to free theology, including creed, from the norms of history. My statement means to dismiss historical criticism as monumentally irrelevant to the truths of theology, for reasons very much like those Mr. Meyer expresses.

On 'Law and Order'

As a former prosecutor and public defender, I found Thomas Fleming's May Perspective, "Law and/or Order," to be very wise. However, I noticed one oversight—no mention of the workfarm, or work camp, as a place of incarceration for some convicts.

When I started practicing in 1969, St. Louis county had a workfarm operated by Mel Abrahamson, who was tough, but very fatherly. Wild, young men would get, upon their first adult felony conviction, a year at the farm. They would hoe onions all day, which gave them time to think about a life of crime and periodic incarceration.

But then they changed the farm into a correctional center for rehabilitating "clients," who were "consumers of the criminal justice system," according to one memo I saw. Mel, not being degreed in criminology, was forced to retire. Required work was out, peer group therapy was in.

I recall one likable client who got a year in prison and my lecture on how he was accountable for his actions and should do his best to profit from the experience. A year or so later I ran into him on the street. He was bitter; he was now a victim of his childhood environment, he said, learning this in "transactional analysis."

—Thomas J. Bieter
Duluth, MN

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A WAR FEVER is breaking out among the leaders of the free world. Congressional Democrats are egging on President Bush to do something about the situation in Bosnia, and their concerns are echoed by Margaret Thatcher, Pope John Paul II, and the conservative leadership of Mr. Bush's own party. As we head into the last months of the presidential campaign, a successful war might just tip the balance in Mr. Bush's favor. On the other hand, failure would prove to be a domestic political disaster. It's a tough situation.

People like George Bush do not listen to people like me, but if I had a few minutes of his time, I would tell him: Don't do it. Does anybody in Congress or the State Department have any idea of what we would be getting into? I doubt it, because if they did, we would not hear so many glib generalities. For a while, all we heard about was the evil Croatian Nazis who slaughtered Serbs and Jews in World War II. More recently, it has been the evil Serbs, and—as things go on—we might hear more of the evil Albanians, the troublemaking Macedonians, perhaps even the thieving gypsies. The truth is, few Americans know anything about Yugoslavia, and those few tend to be ethnic partisans.

Yugoslavia is or was a misbegotten union of at least six distinct Slavic peoples with nothing to bind them together except their common hatred of each other. The largest ethnic group, the Serbs, are a frustrated imperial race, whose defeat at the battle of Kossovo in 1389 led not only to their subjugation by the Turks; it also grafted a permanent chip on their shoulders. The real devils in Serbian history are the Serbs who collaborated with the Turkish oppressor and converted to Islam, and Orthodox Serbs have always dreamed of cleansing their soil from the Muslims who pollute it. They also cherish fierce animosities, not only against the Croatians who slaughtered them like cattle in World War II but also against each other. In Serbia, World War II was played as a civil war between royalist and Communist Serbs.

In 1989, I was taken by a Serbian friend to a Serbian Orthodox monastery not far from Chicago. In the course of the long afternoon of liturgy, it finally dawned on me that we were commemorating the martyrs who had fallen six hundred years earlier. What was even stranger, some of the older men, who had been royalist guerrillas in World War II, carried in pictures of Drazha Mihajlovich, the royalist leader murdered by the Communists.

In their minds, it is all the same struggle, and I recalled the old ballad in which the Serbian prince, on the eve of the battle of Kossovo, is given the choice between victory over the Turks and worldly success or success in heaven and a future of political servitude and Christian faith for his people. The prince chooses God and defeat, and ever since the Serbs have identified the national identity with their religion. The Orthodox Serbs and the Croatian Catholics and the Bosnian Muslims have been killing each other for six hundred years.

It would be just as easy to make out a case for the Serbs as victims as it is to make the case for the Croatians and the Bosnian Muslims. Americans are alarmed and disgusted by the stories of atrocities being committed by Serbs against their prisoners, but similar stories are told of all sides in the struggle. The Serbian aggression has been more successful, simply because there are more Serbs and they can mobilize the military resources of the defunct Communist regime.

The most chilling atrocity story reported in the press are the rapes said to be perpetrated by Serbian guards. One woman told a *Chicago Tribune* reporter that when she became visibly pregnant, her captors sent her away, telling her to "Go to Zagreb and bear Serbian children." This story—appalling as it is—contains the germ of the whole conflict. Anyone who has raised cats, knows that when a male cat finds a mother with a fresh litter of kittens not his own, he slaughters the kittens and reimpregnates the female.

The tomcat's object is to have as many offspring as possible, to spread his own genes as far and wide as he can. Other mammals—including human beings—do similar things. The ugly conflict in Yugoslavia, for all the historical complications, is the most basic and elemental struggle in the world.

It is ethnic warfare at the tribal, even biological level, but it has also taken on the colors of a religious crusade. The Bosnian Muslims are the residue of the Turkish occupation. There are Christians in the United States who sympathize with the plight of Bosnian Muslims. At the same time, they would not like to be in the position of defending Islam against Catholic and Orthodox Christians. Exactly 500 years ago, the same King and Queen of Spain who sent Columbus to the New World expelled the Moors who had conquered and occupied large parts of their country. Humane people may not condone such acts of "ethnic cleansing," but we ought to make an effort to understand them, if only for reasons of self-interest. The last time the Western powers took an interest in Bosnia, the result was World War I, and George Bush would be well-advised to keep America out of Yugoslavia, even if it costs him the election.

—*Thomas Fleming*

OUR "LETTER FROM PRISON" (Correspondence, May 1992) elicited a number of requests for an update. The letter ended with "Frank," a 26-year-old black man imprisoned in Illinois, in solitary confinement at a medium-security prison. He had been placed in isolation for his own protection, because the gang he had once belonged to, the Black Gangster Disciples (G. D.'s), had called for his murder by issuing a statewide "hit." What angered the G. D.'s was Frank's cooperation with a state investigation into a 1991 riot at a maximum-security prison that left him and a few other inmates severely beaten. After two weeks in a St. Louis hospital, Frank passed a lie detector test proving he had nothing to do with the melee and then identified key gang leaders responsible for the attack. For his own safety, he's been transferred to four different facilities in the last four months.

Frank's first transfer after his May letter to *Chronicles* was to a medium-security facility that housed a G. D. board member (one of the gang's 12 leaders in Illinois), even though he had explained to prison officials that the

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G. D.'s would most likely kill him at a facility where a board member is held. The gang leader immediately approached Frank and reported that the hit would be issued soon. The guy was nonthreatening, and relayed the information calmly and without a hint of malice. Like in *The Godfather*, this was business, nothing personal.

Frank was also told that the hit had been delayed because communication among the board members had been temporarily disrupted: a board member's cellular phone had been confiscated in a shakedown! I had long known from my years of contact with Frank that gangs in prison occasionally operated by cellular phones. Officials at the central Department of Corrections in Springfield, Illinois, profess that all measures are taken to curtail interprison communication between gang leaders, but this is untrue. When I heard about Frank's transfer to a facility with a board member, I immediately called the prison to request that Frank be placed in isolation for his own safety until another transfer could be arranged. The lieutenant I spoke with sympathized with Frank's plight, and then openly acknowledged that some wardens and officers will "look the other way" regarding special privileges for board members if in return the gang leaders will help to control prison violence. He candidly admitted that cellular phones were sometimes part of this informal *quid pro quo*.

When I was told that the request for a transfer would have to come from the inmate and not from me, and after hearing from Frank two days later that his request to speak with prison officials had been ignored, I called the internal affairs office in Springfield. The bureaucrat I spoke with doubted my story, particularly the part about cellular phones, because "such things are against the rules." I then identified myself as a journalist and recounted the conversation I had had with the all-too-candid lieutenant downstate. The clerk was shocked silent, after which he assured me that "the matter would be looked into."

After two more weeks in solitary confinement, Frank was transferred to yet another medium-security prison. Again, this facility had a G. D. board member, and once more I set out to request protection for Frank. This time, upon calling the prison, I learned that Frank had already been placed in isolation, not for his own safety, but because he was a "troublemaker."

I immediately assumed Frank had been in a fight, but I didn't know for sure until he called the following week and gave me the complete story. His problems began the day after he arrived, when he was awakened at 7 A.M. and instructed to report to the prison's psychiatrist. Frank told the guard that he hadn't requested such a meeting, but he was ordered to go anyway and to "quit smarting off."

The psychiatrist was, in Frank's words, an "Iranian or Arab of questionable competence." After a quick perusal of Frank's record, the doctor concluded that the young man's many transfers and fights with gang members were the result of an inability to socialize with others and to express anger in nonthreatening ways, problems for which he had just the cure. Awake for five minutes and taken from his cell against his will, Frank was less than receptive to psychoanalysis, and his lack of cooperation only reinforced the doctor's faith in his diagnosis. When Frank refused to take the drugs the doctor wanted to prescribe, and exclaimed that he didn't believe he had a psychiatric problem to begin with, the doctor cried "Denial—the first sign of a problem!" The doctor then added, "It is clear to me that you are *indundated* with problems." Now Frank is no Samuel Johnson, but he knows enough English to realize that he's never been "indundated" with anything. It was because of this standoff that the doctor filed a report about Frank's "recalcitrance."

An incident that followed a couple of days later only confirmed for the warden the doctor's diagnosis. While waiting to hear about his request for another transfer, Frank was assigned a job in the prison kitchen. The inmate managing the kitchen took a liking to Frank, and determined that the new kid "needed a friend." Frank was uncertain whether the cook was insinuating a homosexual relationship, but in any event he told him that he didn't need any "friends," that he simply wanted "to be left alone to do his time in peace." The man then cracked jokes about the Rodney King riots, at which everyone in the kitchen except Frank laughed. The cook assumed he had been "dissed," and an argument ensued, during which Frank verbally exploded. The many transfers, the threat on his life, the many months in isolation, the runaround he'd had with the prison psychiatrist, the news that some of his personal belongings (his letters, books, and radio) had been lost during his last transfer—the strain and frustration of these matters all came to a head, and contributed to the anger he unleashed on the cook. Frank was reprimanded for unruly behavior and placed in solitary confinement the following day.

For his "proven inability" to live peaceably in medium security, Frank spent a month in isolation and was then transferred back to maximum security. Actually this was exactly what Frank had wanted, for only maximum-security prisons have formal facilities for inmates in protective custody. Of the two institutions he could be transferred to, the protective-custody area at one of them consists merely of another wing of the same building housing the general prison population, and security for the p.c. inmates is extremely lax; the other prison is safer, with the p.c. population housed in a separate building. If sent to the least secure of the two facilities, Frank had little hope of surviving his sentence without an attempt on his life.

I again contacted Springfield and requested the safer of the two prisons. I later found out that Frank's transfer had been changed at the last minute, apparently to accommodate this request. I'd like to think that the original assignment was changed because of the state's concern for Frank's safety, but no doubt my phone call had an effect. It's one thing for inmates to be killed in prison; it happens every day. (In fact, as I write, Frank's prison is on a 90-day lock-down because of two violent incidents, one involving an argument over a homosexual liaison and the other concerning a fight between rival gangs; the casualty count after three days: one inmate dead, four inmates wounded, and three guards hospitalized.) But it's quite another matter if someone "from the outside," and especially a journalist, not only knows about a forthcoming murder, but had even informed the prison beforehand of the danger to the victim's life.

Which brings us to the present. Frank was accepted into the protective-custody program at the maximum-security prison where he currently resides. He has formally requested that his "good time" be returned, which was suspended because of his many transfers. If approved, Frank could be released next January; if denied, he'll be released

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in January 1994. Frank has also agreed to meet regularly with a therapist. For according to what the Department of Children and Family Services told him last July, if upon release from prison he would ever like to see his son again, who is now age seven, he must consent to counseling and therapy now. Frank agreed to this because he loves his son, but he nevertheless resents the legal extortion the state exercises in the name of "family welfare." As he explained to me recently, "The counselor is a nice lady, and occasionally it is good to have someone to talk to. But I wasn't convicted of a sex crime, or of abusing children. The state has no right to hold my child captive or control my family after I've paid my legal debt to society."

Frank faces a double-threat: the wrath of the gangs and the benevolence of the therapeutic state.

—*Theodore Pappas*

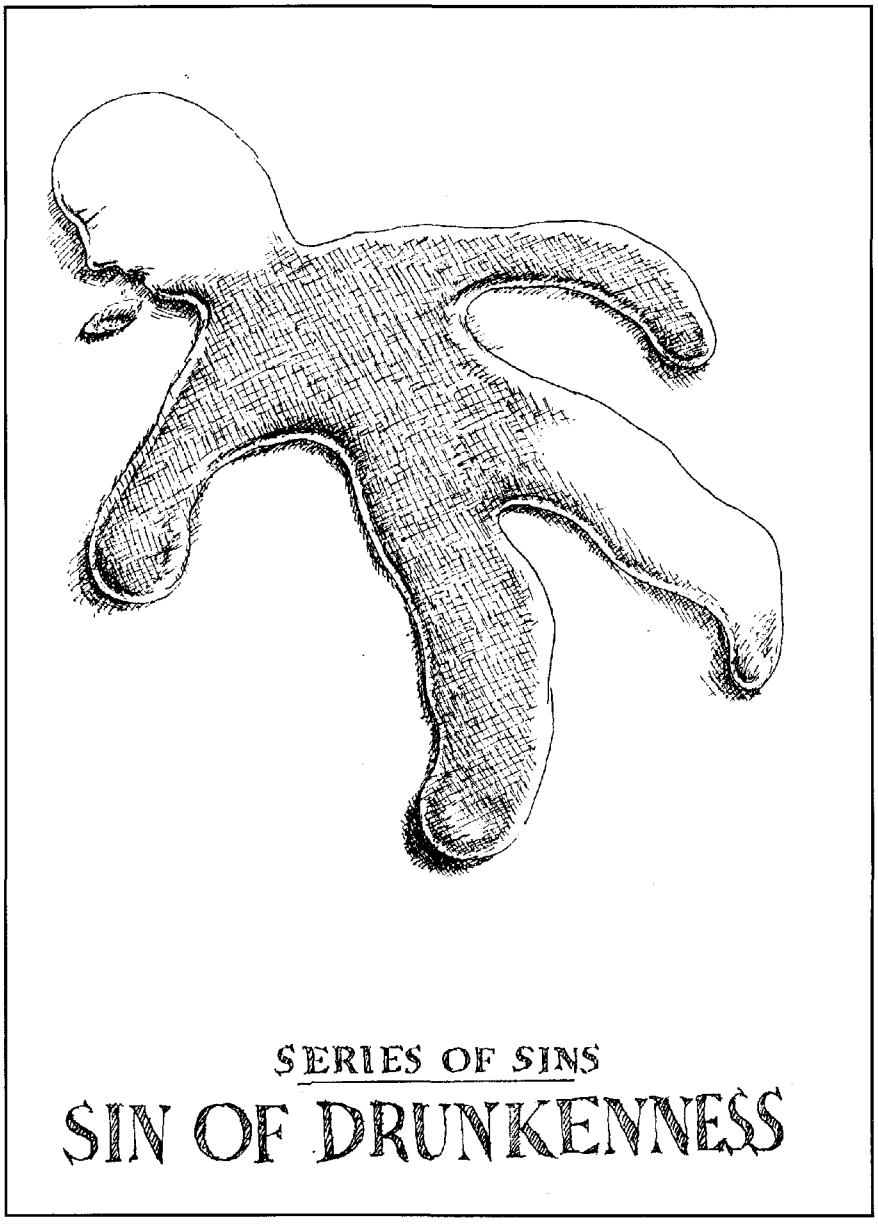
REGARDING EUROPE, I've got a nagging twofold question I'd love to have answered: Why has no one remarked on the incredible, glaring double standard in Establishment treatment of ex-Nazi and Communist regimes? And what in blazes is the justification for that double standard? We start with a stipulation, presumably made both by myself and by all members of the Establishment (i.e., the spectrum from left-liberals like the *New York Times* over to official conservatives and neoconservatives): that both the Nazi and Communist regimes were despotic, evil, and genocidal. So, in that case, how come the double standard, both in actual treatment of former officials in the two regimes, and in Received Opinion about such treatment?

After the end of World War II, Nazis and their collaborators, both real and alleged, were a) slaughtered on the spot by vengeful Communist successor-regimes or by Communist partisans (as in Italy or France); b) indicted and convicted, first by the Allies and then by successor regimes, for "war crimes" and "crimes against humanity," with the leaders put to death or sentenced to long jail terms; c) masses of officials were "denazified" and either jailed or prevented from holding office; and d) for the past 47 years, alleged ex-Nazis, down to the status of concentration camp guards, were yanked out of their beds as American citizens or out of some South American jungle to stand trial for these crimes either in their Communist-run homeland or in Israel. Moreover, Received Opinion of the Establishment is constantly berating Western countries, including the United States, for having been too soft on ex-Nazis, etc. And then as the decades pass, we are urged on every side to "never forget" the Nazi crimes.

Okay, but now consider the contrast in treating *Communists*. The revolutionary implosions of Communist regimes since 1989 have occurred peacefully, and successor regimes peacefully established. Not only guards, but high officials, even secret police officials, have not only *not* been executed or tried for their crimes against humanity, but most of them are still there, still in place—either as bureaucrats serving new regimes, or as "former" Communists now calling themselves "Social Democrats" or whatever.

It is a massive understatement to say that there has been no decommunization whatsoever, nothing comparable to the denazification of yore. Not only have the KGB and the East German Stasi not been brought to book for their crimes, but now the big argument in the former Communist countries is whether the infamous secret police files should even be opened to the public, much less acted upon.

How has the Establishment reacted to this shocking contrast in treatment of ex-despots and state criminals. Have



Janusz Kapusta

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they denounced it? On the contrary, the entire Establishment, from left-liberal to Official Conservative to neoconservative, has lauded this wonderful, peaceful, forbearance; this clasping of former Communist rulers and secret police thugs and informers to everyone's bosom; this pursuit of mercy over vengeance; this oh-so-beloved "velvet" revolution. The Establishment is also quick to denounce even the slightest sign of wanting to throw the rascals out, and to bring them to trial for their monstrous crimes. Why "never forget" in the one case, and quick peace and "healing" in the other?

The *New York Times* and other mainstream organs, far from wanting decommunization, even want to protect the vicious secret police informers from the people's vengeance. Not the Gestapo, of course, but the KGB, the Stasi, and equivalents. Thus, stories in the *New York Times* often complain about the fact that the old secret police files have been opened, so that people find out that their spouses, or lovers, or close friends had reported regularly on them to the secret police. As a result, marriages, loves, friendships have broken up. Wonder why? But the Establishment puts the blame for these broken marriages and friendships *not* on the informers but on the process of opening up the files.

Once again, as too often in history, the reaction is to shoot the messenger of bad news. The moral of the story is not to close the files, but to open them further, and to act upon them; that is, to take action against these monstrous betrayers and informers. Stringing them up in the public square doesn't seem too harsh.

The *New York Times*' man in Eastern Europe, Stephen Engelberg, always seems to be in the forefront of the anti-open-files, antivengeance forces. Recently, Engelberg was wailing about the one country in Eastern Europe that really wants to decommunize, Czechoslovakia. It seems that a former prominent Czech exile in London, Jan Kavan, editor of an exile magazine, has been uncovered as an informer to the Commie secret police. Since Kavan is a prominent Czech Social Democrat, Engelberg has been complaining of the injustice now being done to poor Kavan, who according to this miscreant only engaged in a few harmless conversations with the Czech equivalent of the KGB.

Under the active drive of one of the few *real* free-market reformers in the ex-Communist countries, Czech Minister of Finance Vaclav Klaus, Czechoslovakia has passed a unique, and most welcome, "lustration" law. "Lustration" is a venerable term for religious purification, generally of an entire community. And so Klaus and his crew of genuine anti-communists and antisocialists want to "lustrate" their country by prohibiting any ex-Communist official from enjoying government employment for the next five years. To me, this seems a very mild first step, and a fate far too good for this criminal gang.

But to the U. S. Establishment, the *New York Times* and all their fellow-travelers, this is an act of vengeance to be deplored, a harsh measure depriving the country of their best men, blah blah. It should be obvious that the reason for this tenderness is the idea that Commies, no matter how deplorable, were really not terrible monsters such as the Nazis, but good-guy socialists who suffered from an unfortunate excess of zeal. It should be equally clear that this strange tenderness has surfaced because there really is not that much difference between Commies and Social Democrats and between Bolsheviks and Mensheviks, and that clearing the land of Communists will therefore inevitably sweep up in its net a myriad of Social Democrats, the group most favored by the *New York Times, Washington Post, New York Review of Books, Commentary*, et al. In every Eastern European country, it is the Social Democrats and their western buddies who receive all the plaudits and laurels of the U. S. Respectables. Thus, virtually every Establishment attitude toward Poland must get filtered through the lenses of the incredibly beloved (in America, not in Poland) Adam Michnik, Social Democrat agitator.

It has become all too evident that the reformers in the old Soviet Union and in Eastern Europe have only been paying lip-service to privatization and to the free market. One crucial problem is that progress, especially toward privatization, has been stalled by the existing bureaucrats, many of whom have found it expedient to change their ideological allegiance from Communist to Social Democrat, but who are still socialists, statists clinging to power.

The accepted method of spurring the reform, touted from left-liberals to neoconservatives, is to drain more U. S. tax money into billions of foreign aid. But such aid will not and cannot accelerate genuine reform; all it can do, on the contrary, is to delay the free market and to prolong statist repression of the ex-Communist economies. The old socialist elites, whether calling themselves "democrats" or not, need to be blasted loose, and that blasting can only be delayed or even prevented by American aid.

The Establishment media have not allowed us to grasp this crucial fact: that it is no coincidence that the Czech lustration program is being pushed by the same people, headed by Vaclav Klaus, who *also* insist on rapid privatization, a program that contrasts starkly with the lionized Yeltsin's scheme of "free prices" while retaining the same old pattern of ownership. The Klaus forces are behind both lustration and privatization because both are part-and-parcel of a unified policy of destatization. Getting rid of socialist bureaucrats, whether they call themselves Bolsheviks or Mensheviks, is an essential part of genuine reform. Lustration and vengeance go hand-in-hand with genuine privatization; mercy and "social peace" go hand-in-hand with the Establishment's neoconservative policy of phony free-market reform and of continuing Menshevik rule.

—*Murray N. Rothbard*

CONQUERORS and intellectuals have dreamt of one big European government for centuries. The goal, as with all such millenarian fantasies, was to transform people's national allegiances (viewed as reactionary and divisive) into larger loyalties to "Europe" (viewed as progressive and cosmopolitan). But they face the barrier even today that there are no "Europeans," but only Frenchmen, Britons, Sicilians, etc.

Those who have pushed for a politically unified Europe hoped this would be their year. But in a surprising vote, the Danes said no to the Maastricht unification treaty, which would have abolished their nation's economic, monetary, and military independence. Many Danes suspected it would also eventually eviscerate their cultural identity and language. To them, the vision of a unified Europe meant the reality of being ruled by an unelected foreign bureaucracy in distant Brussels. "We are a country with an Anglo-Saxon tradition

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of self-governance by elected laypersons at a low level," said a Danish political scientist. "We are mistrustful of central governments."

Because the treaty requires the approval of all 12 countries in the European Community, the people of Denmark—despite a massive campaign by government, business, media, and labor—have killed it. All the special interests, political and financial, that stood to benefit from the treaty, and have worked so hard on it for so long, are in an open state of panic. After the vote, the leaders of Germany and France vowed to "proceed unswervingly" towards "European union" and called an emergency session of the European Commission to try to figure out how to do it. But they face a legal barrier: the treaty cannot go into effect without 12 affirmative votes.

In fact, the problems for super-Europeans may have only just begun. Despite Ireland's endorsement of the treaty on welfare grounds—about as surprising as Harlem's approval of Food Stamps—all over Europe, there is a growing sense of nationhood and a desire for local self-government. The German people are more and more reluctant to give up their strong mark for a weak European Currency Unit run by a Continent-wide central bank. In France, right-wing political leader Jean Marie Le Pen draws huge crowds to oppose the treaty, while the social democratic EC president, Jacques Delors, talks to himself. Northern Italians are voting in greater and greater numbers for independence from the central government in Rome and its welfare clients in the South. The last thing they want is a supergovernment that makes Rome look frugal and responsive. Margaret Thatcher has long warned against the "socialist superstate in Brussels," and in fact her reforms might have been impossible had the Maastricht treaty been in effect. Now even her pro-Europe successor, John Major, may be coming around, as more and more Britons cheer Queen and country against bureaucrat and Continent.

Unity seemed tempting. With a population of 340 million and a GNP of more than $4 trillion, the EC would be the world's largest trading bloc. The left liked the centralization as well as the EC's Social Charter, which guarantees welfare "rights" and trade union control of European labor markets. European neoconservatives liked it because it was a basic building block of the New World Order.

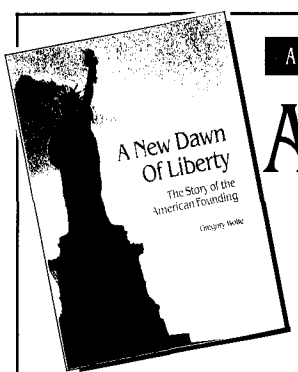
Negotiations have been in progress for decades, but for a finally awakened Danish people, the treaty seemed like a dive into the abyss. Danes began to wonder: Can a nation secede from the union? How long is the agreement binding? Are there limits to the economic policies Brussels can impose? Will a Continental tax and regulatory police enforce EC policy? Will Brussels be able to impose economic sanctions on rebellious countries? There were no answers from the pan-Europeans, meaning the truth was unpalatable.

Maastricht would have established Europe-wide regulations, taxes, and antitrust policies. But the most serious danger was the abolition of separate currencies and the creation of a new European currency and central bank. Such a system would have meant Continental credit expansion to the benefit of the elites, while the middle class bore the inflationary and business-cycle consequences. If stability of the international monetary system is the goal, there is only one way to bring that about: abolition of central banking and establishment of a 19th-century gold standard. Even the current managed exchange rate system is better than more centralization.

For many years, ideologues have told us that small, independent nations are irrelevant. Conventional wisdom during the Cold War said they had to be part of a massive bloc to matter. This was always bunk, but with the Cold War over, most people in both Europe and America want a return to normalcy, meaning, working hard, raising families, participating in community life, and enjoying peace and prosperity. That implies small political groupings. People are tired of big experiments like a unified Europe, which promise much and deliver little. And they realize, if only instinctively, that distant government is always more oppressive than local bodies.

Cut through all the rhetoric about "cooperation" and "coordination" and the plan to unify Europe is about one thing: social democracy. That's an idea that, like its brother socialism, ought to be tossed in the trash compactor of history.

—Llewellyn H. Rockwell



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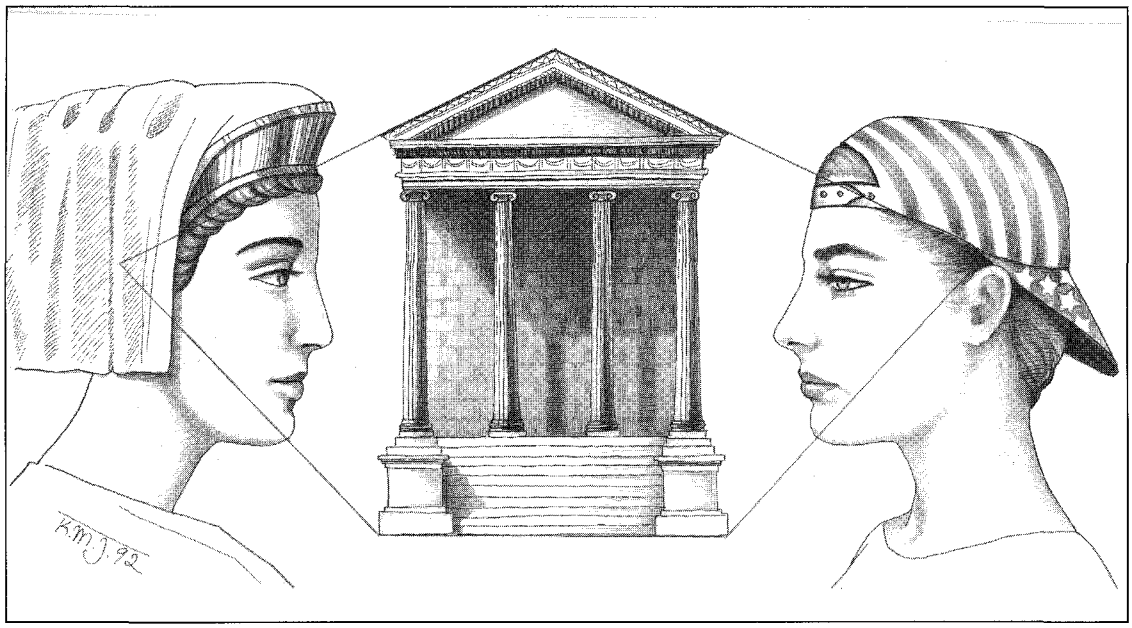

Krystyna Jachniewicz-Zarebski

Go East, Young Man

by Thomas Fleming

We shall soon be celebrating the cardinal date of the second Christian millennium, the fall of New Rome, otherwise known as Constantinople in 1453. For a thousand years after the collapse of the Western empire, New Rome had stood, a living museum of Greek culture and Roman law, the last organic link with the origins of our civilization. For centuries—at least since 1204, when Crusaders sacked the city—Constantinople had been a shadow of its former glories, the empire a hollow fiction with boundaries hardly broader than those of the smallest Italian commune. Catholic Europe had learned to deride her rulers as the Emperor of the Greeks, but when Manuel II made his futile trip to Europe in search of Christian help against the Turks, our gaudy barbarian ancestors were struck with the nobility and simplicity of the emperor.

Unlike the empire of the West, whose flame had guttered out in vice and imbecility, the empire of the East went down with all the glory of a sunset. Constantine Paleologus, whom Gibbon describes as the last and best of the Caesars, refused all offers of escape. He preferred to put on the uniform of a common soldier and died fighting with his men in the streets of The City, for in those days it was *the city*, the symbol of all civilized life, and to this day the infidel conquerors call it Istanbul, garbled Greek for "to the city."

Charles Williams once suggested that the Reformation was a just retribution upon the Western Christians who had turned their backs on the Eastern church. The defense of the city against the Turks may have been impossible, but the European powers barely lifted a finger to save the Greek Christians who crossed themselves the wrong way. The Popes were willing to call a Crusade, but only if the Romaioi acknowledged his authority. The last emperors acceded, precipitating a schism that made it even harder to hold out against the enemy.

It was a Hungarian who manufactured the cannon that breached the walls and Christians who taught the Turks how to concentrate their fire. In the end, it was a Genoese commander (Giustiniani) who, receiving a wound, deserted his post and escaped through a hole in the wall, followed by the greater part of the western allies. The betrayal was altogether fitting, since the Genoese, hoping to preserve their own trading colony, had made a separate peace with the Sultan.

In undermining the emperor, Genoa had worked hand in hand with its chief rival, Venice. It was a Venetian Doge, at the head of his fleet,who persuaded the leaders of the notorious Fourth Crusade, when they sacked the city and imposed their barbarian rule upon the East, and it was the Venetians who had sought to monopolize the trade of the East and undermine the economic base of the empire.

In this activity, Genoa was not far behind. As a Pisan proverb has it, Genoa was a "sea without fish, men without honor, and women without shame." The Pisans had, perhaps, a right to be resentful. For several centuries, they had labored to enrich themselves at the expense of the Moslems, and no maritime power had been more forthright in joining any expedition—to Sardinia, to Sicily, to Majorca, and even to the coast of North Africa—where the Cross could be advanced, their pockets filled. It is easy to be cynical about the freebooting "republic of the waves," but when Pisans captured Palermo from the Saracens, they devoted a large part of the

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spoils to the facade of their great cathedral. Defeated by Genoa in 1284, Pisa was subjugated by Florence in 1406, but even under the Florentine yoke, Pisan merchants continued to prosper in the levant trade.

The Eastern empire had been the cynosure of the maritime republics, Genoa, Venice, Amalfi, and Pisa. By the 15th century, only Venice and Genoa were in a position to help the city, whose capture spelled ultimate ruin for the merchant republics that depended upon the Eastern trade. The influx of Byzantine exiles, before and after the conquest, helped to inspire that rebirth of classical literature, languages, and art we call the Renaissance, and on a deeper level, the dwindling and demise of the city, in breaking the links with the past, set the Italian mind free to invent a mythical and glorious ancient world, an equally mythical Dark Age, and a future restoration of classical antiquity. Such was the dream of Petrarch and his disciples. Elaborate plans were drawn up for rebuilding Rome, "just as it was," and these dreams of restoring the empire were to inspire every would-be world ruler down to Hitler, Mussolini, and Stalin. In fact, the great political myth of the Russians is that they are the real successors to the Byzantine Empire and that Moscow is the Third Rome.

But if the fall of Constantinople served to liberate Italian culture, it also closed the Eastern frontier that had attracted so many hardy and rebellious spirits. A city might in principle be governed by an emperor's vassal, by a handful of merchant oligarchs, or by a Machiavellian prince like Castruccio Castracani, but the seas were free. On their voyages, the merchants of Genoa and Pisa enforced their own laws, carried out their own foreign policy, made alliances and conducted wars as if they lived in a state of nature.

In the four centuries (roughly 1000-1400) when Pisa, Lucca, Florence, and Siena were busily beating each other's brains out for predominance in their part of Tuscany—a region smaller than Vermont—their peoples were acquiring liberty for themselves and creating a civilization that the world has been living off ever since. It was the second great creative age of the West, and it was a period of unremitting competition, strife, and carnage.

Little Pisa, with a population and area smaller than Rockford, Illinois, was willing to take on the world. A national news program, describing the structural problems of the Leaning Tower, commented that if not for the Tower, no one would go to Pisa. It is true that we did our best to bomb the Campo Santo into Detroit, but the cluster of buildings around the Cathedral of Santa Maria may be the most impressive urban scene devised by man.

As my friend Leo Raditsa once pointed out to me, you can date the Florentine conquest of a Tuscan town by its art history. Once Pisa and Siena were absorbed into greater Florence, they ceased to be creative and the cityscape is fossilized in its period of independence. Florence grew at the expense of Siena as Venice gradually sucked the vitality out of Verona.

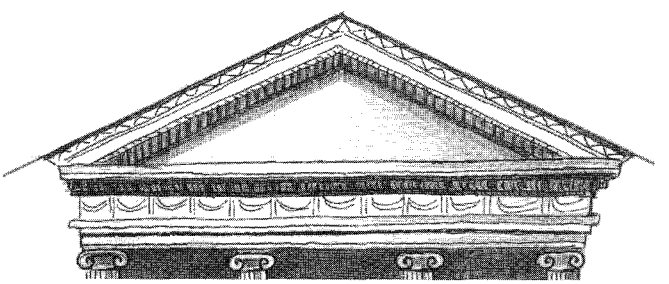
When I explain all this to my teenage son, he wonders why I worry so much about books and paintings. I tell him that poetry and art, important as they are in themselves, are also the vital signs of culture, an index to their more general creativity, a measure of their success as human beings engaged in what is ultimately a tragic and futile struggle to make sense of their lives. I became a localist, years ago in school, when I began to realize the cultural significance of jerkwater places like Sicyon and Ceos and Greenville, Mississippi.

By the end of the 15th century, however, the social and political structure of Italy had hardened. Naples (and Sicily) were already in the hands of the Spanish, and before long Milan would fall under the same yoke. The Florentines, under the gangster dynasty of the Medici, maintained only an external independence—autonomy but not liberty. Cut off from the East, the Italian states became increasingly provincial, indolent, ingrown. The patchwork of feudal loyalties and commercial *communi* had slowly been recast into a more orderly pattern of regional empires: Florence, Venice, Milan, the papal states, and Naples all held sway not only over their own *contado* but also over dozens of subjugated communes and principalities.

In the civilized arts, however, the Italians continued to dominate throughout the next century, but the poetry and the painting—magnificent as they are—seem less fresh, more mannered. (Compare Botticelli or Signorelli with, for example, Caravaggio; Dante and Boccaccio with Tasso). Of course, it is only in the later Renaissance that Italy became known preeminently for its music, an art in which Italians were to dominate until the end of the 18th century and in which they continued to excel until the early 20th century, when music was, for the most part, abandoned as a serious art form.

Apart from *The Magic Flute*, Mozart's great operas are all written to Italian librettos, the best of them by a good-looking confidence man, Lorenzo Da Ponte, who immortalized his remarkable career in a memoir marked by a mixture of dishonesty and simplicity that is almost unparalleled. After being booted out of Venice, Vienna, Paris, and London, he made his way—like so many misfits—to our shores, and after a brief career as a traveling salesman and *saltimbanco* he became the first professor of Italian literature at Columbia.

In the centuries when Italy was slowly subsiding into a tourist attraction, reckless Europeans were looking westward. The inexperienced and down-at-heels Genoese sailor who discovered the New World sought the patronage first of Portugal and then of Spain. He may even have thought of England, but not of the great maritime power that gave him his birth. Cristoforo Colombo was far from being the only Italian sailor to make Atlantic voyages. The Cabots, sailing for England, explored the Northern coasts of North America, while Verrazano under the French flag made his way down the coast from New York to North Carolina.



By the mid-16th century, however, we hear only of Spanish, French, Dutch, and English explorers, colonists, and conquerors. The Italians, become the pawns of Austrians and Spaniards, continue to compose operas and paint pictures, and the tough and ruthless people who started "all this" turn into stock characters in Northern European farce. (Conrad's Nostromo and Wilkie Collins' Count Fosco are two of the

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only manly Italians in our literature.)

There are more iron laws of history than just the law of oligarchy. One of them was stated succinctly by Bob Dylan: "He who is not busy being born is busy dying." It is the nature of states (using that term very loosely to cover all polities) to expand, either by conquest or colonization. Their rivals are either absorbed to become part of the successful expanding power or else find their own avenues for growth. By the 18th century the competition for colonies and foreign markets plays a dominant role in European politics, and the New World tail begins to wag the Old World dog, decades before the American War for Independence.

The expansion of European man across the Americas is one of the great sagas of world history, and while it is customary to depict our progress across the continent as an uninterrupted sequence of genocidal massacres, the other side of the story—our side, if you will—is far more interesting. What can we say of the character of men like Columbus and John Smith or, even better, of Cortez, whose bones the Mexican revolutionaries wanted to dig up and desecrate. The story of his conquest is the most incredible tale since Xenophon. That Columbus and Cortez were ruthless adventurers goes without saying, but it is their hardihood and recklessness that define the American character at its best. The official history that now proclaims the conquistadores and frontiersmen outlaws is, in a profound sense, a rejection of ourselves—if it is proper, any longer, even to speak of an American "us."

The frontier, starting at the Atlantic, replaced the East, not only in an economic sense, but also in a moral and political sense. As an outlet for European expansion, North America became the new setting for the recreation of political liberty, and while the social and political evolution of the American states and Italian *communi* took quite different paths, there are common themes. If Genoa and Pisa found their liberty at sea, the Americans discovered their liberty—and their identity—on the frontier.

In his famous essay on the frontier, Frederick Jackson Turner dwells at length upon the formation of a distinctive American character and on the development of democratic institutions. As an aside, he pointed to what he regarded as the darker side of the frontier experience—the tendencies toward anarchism and violence:

> . . . the frontier is productive of individualism. Complex society is precipitated by the wilderness into a kind of primitive social organization based on the family. The tendency is anti-social. It produces antipathy to control, and particularly to any direct control. The tax-gatherer is viewed as a representative of oppression . . . the frontier conditions prevalent in the colonies are important factors in the explanation of the American revolution, where individual liberty was sometimes confused with the absence of all effective government.

A few pages later, Turner inserts a footnote on "the lawless characteristics of the frontier," and cites "the gambler and desperado, the regulators of the Carolinas, and the vigilantes of California" as "types of that line of scum that the waves of advancing civilization bore before them." Turner, one has to remember, wrote at the height of the Progressive era, when all the best men assumed, as a matter of course, that government was the benign agency of progress.

Reduced to less polemical terms, Turner's observations are a fair description of the frontier experience. The "primitive social organization based on the family" is otherwise known as patriarchy, the most basic and essential form of social organization. Civilized communities slowly wean themselves from the elementary facts of life and learn to nourish themselves on peculiar diets and bureaucratic regimens, but thrust back into the real world they easily rediscover the most natural institutions. Robinson Crusoe becomes king of his island, the Swiss Family Robinson functions as a patriarchal clan, the admirable Crichton changes from obsequious butler into a father of his people, and a boatload of Anglican choirboys transforms itself into a ruthless band of hunters, complete with leaders, rules, and cults. These are European fables, but they go to the heart of the American experience.

I shall not repeat what I have previously written (October 1990) on the rediscovery of family autonomy on the American frontier, except to say that it—and not the ideas of John Locke or even Thomas Jefferson—was the real basis of American liberty. Free families in search of free land might view the tax-collector as the enemy, but they were far from lawless. The very examples that Turner cites—the Carolina Regulators and the California vigilantes—are the refutation of his rhetoric. Committees of vigilance are the expression of a community's determination to enforce a moral order, and even where government agents existed, many frontier communities preferred lynch law as a concrete demonstration of their moral sentiments.

Vigilante groups are only one manifestation of the American preference for private associations over government agencies, and in a later essay Turner was to repeat Tocqueville's praise for "extra-legal, involuntary associations":

> This power of the newly arrived pioneers to join together for a common end without the intervention of governmental institutions was one of their marked characteristics. The log rolling, the house-raising, the husking bee, the apple paring, and the squatters associations whereby they protected themselves against the speculators in securing title to their clearings on the public domain, the camp meeting, the mining camp, the vigilantes, the cattle-raisers' associations, the 'gentlemen's agreements,' are a few of the indications of this attitude. . . . America does through informal associations and understandings on the part of the people many of the things which in the Old World are and can be done only by government intervention and compulsion. These associations were in America not due to immemorial custom of tribe or village community. They were extemporized by voluntary action.

Turner follows Tocqueville in emphasizing the difference between the Old World and the New, and the distinction is valid—up to a point—for the period he is discussing, but the voluntary associations of America are rooted in the immemorial customs of European villages. Consider only the distinctive American institution of the shivaree—the rowdy mockery, burlesque, and practical jokes to which newlyweds were exposed. The origin of the term is, of course, the French *charivari*, a general European (really, a universal human) device used to repress excessive individualism and to express com-

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munity sentiment against social deviance. The message to the young couple is a warning not to get wrapped up in themselves at the expense of their neighbors; more often the *charivari* was employed to show disapproval of wife-beaters, adulterers, or old men taking young wives.

The New England Puritans were famous for their colorful methods of exerting social control, but the ducking stool, the stocks, and scarlet letters were all transported from old England. Before European man had created the modern states that have absorbed so much of his social and political energies, he knew how to mind his own business, govern his neighborhood, and solve all the petty problems that have always and will always plague our fallen human nature.

In the early Italian *communi*, it is hardly possible to speak of the state. On the political level, Pisa or Lucca might in theory be governed by the emperor's representative—although the Bishop's powers, especially in the rural parishes, was very great both in law and in practice. The real life of the town, however, was conducted with scant reference to the Visconte or even to the consuls who replaced him. The commune itself—and its consols—was more a private association of the rich and powerful than anything we could call a state, and the consuls were free to conduct business on their own account, merging their own resources with those of the city. In this the Italians were normal rather than exceptional. The strict separation between private and public interest is a modern and northern European phenomenon. Paul Veyne, in his contribution to *The History of Private Life*, compares the civil and military administrators of the Roman Empire to a mafia *capo* who simultaneously protects and squeezes his clients: "A Roman noble has more in common with this 'godfather' than with a modern technocrat."

In modern America it is the mafia (at least in its idealized form) that embodies ancestral European custom and the republican institutions of the commune, not the hypocrisy of honest government and political reform—the perennial slogans of those who wish to consolidate their power by freezing out the competition. But if the "godfathers" of the commune represented the highest form of socioeconomic organization in late medieval Italian towns, they were far from holding a monopoly. In addition to the Church, there were the various *arti*—trade guilds—that set standards, determined weights and measures, punished infractions of various kinds. There were also alliances of merchants and noblemen, including the "tower associations"—mutual defense pacts of families living in proximity to each other and maintaining a common tower for their protection. The neighborhoods themselves were often a fundamental unit of government, choosing their own mayors and judges, settling disputes.

Despite all these other forms of association, the family remained the foundation of the social order, and if one family member offended another, the difficulty was to be settled by the head or elders. If a man of one family murdered a member of another, the response was not law but *vendetta*—the word Dante regularly uses to mean justice.

In many ways, Pisa in the 12th century resembles nothing so much as Tennessee in the days of Andrew Jackson and the Benton brothers, rough men who followed the course of the expanding frontier in search of abundant game, free land, and the opportunity to "catch the shortest way" to success. Turner was inspired to write his essay by the 1890 census, which had declared the closing of the frontier. If American democracy was the peculiar product of the frontier experience, what sort of political revolution did the future have in store? If Turner had only looked inside himself, he would have found the answer. As a Progressive gone to the Ivy League, Turner favored the style of government activism that would find its expression in Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal, and the creative and expansionist impulses of Americans were transferred, inevitably, from the conquest of the continent to the creation of a bureaucratic infrastructure at home and an economic and political empire abroad.

There are opportunities for Western businesses, it goes without saying, but in the New World of the East, America will be only one of the players, perhaps not the most important.

Some nations thrive on peace and settled order, but European man has always been a wanderer, an adventurer, a conqueror. By the second millennium our ancestors were on the move, drifting into what we now call Europe. India and Persia, Greece and Italy became home to distinctively Indo-European civilizations that merged and blended with the previous populations. Other waves of settlers poured into Northern Europe, although the Celts had occupied Lombardy by the fourth century B. C. Later waves of Germans and Slavs destroyed most of the Roman Empire, only to be attacked by their Viking cousins, as soon as they settled down into the ways of peace. Among the most violent and aggressive of these barbarians were the Franks, but the tale of their rapid degeneration is all too familiar and depressing. I fear we too often interpret Lord Acton's admonitions on the corruption of power in a metaphorical sense, but the corruption of Frankish kings and the American Congress is no abstraction.

The European story is only a major-key variation on a human theme. Man is by nature a competitive beast who seeks dominion, both as an individual and as a member of a tribe. He thrives on domestic strife and local competitions. As Machiavelli observed, Rome's political liberties were the product of their endless rounds of class conflict. "To me those who condemn the quarrels between the nobles and the plebs, seem to be cavilling at the very things that were the primary cause of Rome's retaining her freedom. . . . Nor do they realize that in every republic there are two different dispositions, that of the populace and that of the upper class and that all legislation favorable to liberty is brought about by the clash between them."

But if domestic conflict leads to liberty at home, it is wars with the neighbors that sharpens the character of the commonwealth: "Should heaven . . . be so kind to it [the commonwealth] that it has no need to go to war, it will then come about that idleness will either render it effeminate or give rise to factions; and these two things, either in conjunction or separately, will bring about its downfall."

Machiavelli's discourses are only ostensibly about ancient Rome. The intention is to provide political lessons to 16th-century Italy in general and in particular to the corrupted Florentine republic that had lost the *virtu* that is required of a

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free people. That *virtu*, as we all know, followed the frontier and passed to Spain, to England, to Holland, and to France, and ultimately to the Americas, where it was extinguished in the course of the 20th century.

Am I arguing that America and Western Europe are locked onto the wheel of fate, that since our day has come and gone, we should sit under the trees, drinking wine, reading old poetry, and catching the occasional trout? There are worse ways to live, of course, but—as the old saying goes—fortune doesn't close one door without opening another. If there is any strength to these observations, then the main challenge to modern states is to discover challenges. For a time it seemed that the exploration of space was "the final frontier," but that hope fizzled out long before the Challenger disaster that exposed the frailty of our commitment to space exploration. For the most part, space exploration has become just another business.

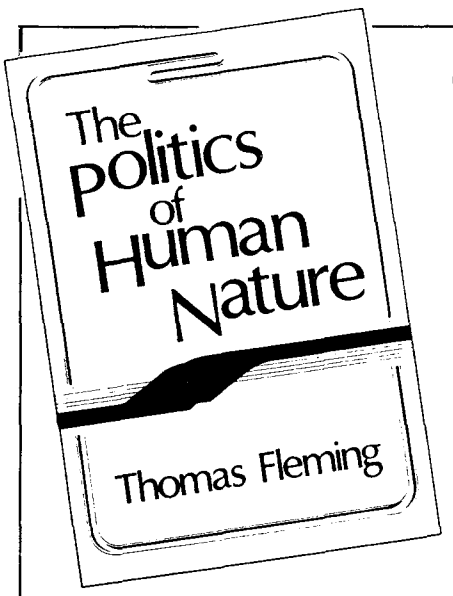
If space is not the frontier, could the exploration of inner space provide the challenge? Pisa, ruined by military defeat and depopulated by malaria, devoted much of the town's surplus energies to its university, and in a more general way, the Italians learned to carry on their wars "by other means," confining themselves to a merely cultural aggression. But even if political impotence can be mitigated by aesthetic strength, if the success of Rossini and Bellini can assuage national vanity, the idea of a cultural frontier can only apply to a rare class of sylphs—"if he's content with a vegetable love, which would certainly not suit me, why what a most particularly pure young man, this pure young man must be."

Besides, even the artist grows febrile and innervated in a politically emasculated society. Eighteenth-century Italian poetry is generally dreadful, and when a great poet did come along in the person of Leopardi, the rest of the world was content to discount him as a freak or even to ignore his existence (at least until recently, since there appears to be some sort of Leopardi revival going on).

I would wish my people to escape the fate of the Lydians who were saved for a life of pleasure. One of Professor Turner's older contemporaries, William James, wrote of the need in modern societies for a "moral equivalent of war," but so far no one has found the moral equivalent for any of the most basic human affections and institutions—competition and war, private property and the free market, marriage and family. We have tried to replace all of them in the course of this century, and the finest result was the Soviet Empire so recently brought to its knees.

The collapse of communism and the disintegration of the Soviet Union inflicted a shock to the world system—something like a hole punched into the pressured cabin of a high-altitude aircraft. Nature abhors a vacuum, and despite all our flailing and floundering efforts, the United States is not going to fill any of the voids—military, economic, ideological, cultural—that have been created. There are opportunities for Western businesses, it goes without saying, but in the New World of the East, America will be only one of the players, perhaps not the most important.

The frontier, which had been moving westward since the fall of Constantinople has now, with the liberation of the Third Rome, reappeared in the East. There is now a united Germany, once again, and if we strain our ears we can begin to detect the whispered demands for a pan-German state. Meanwhile, the hybrid states of Versailles are breaking up like overloaded ships in heavy seas. Even the shipwreck survivors, clinging to the flotsam and jetsam, seem bent on destroying each other, and yet, what all this violence conceals, is the fact that a new Europe is being born, and it may not matter much what sort of arrangements the bureaucrats in Brussels engineer. The Wild West is now the Wild East, and Americans will have to work very hard, if they want to be in on the action. ©



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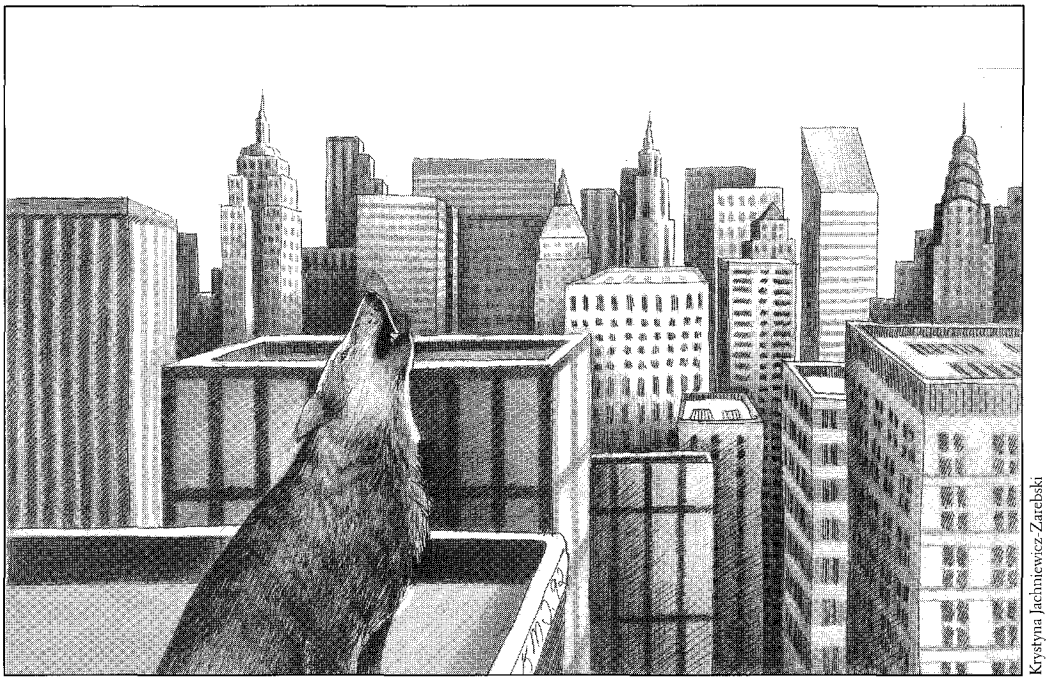
Gift: The Life of Lorenzo Da Ponte

by David R. Slavitt



Krystyna Jachniewicz-Zatebski

Not merely a strange place, but the home of strangeness,
the land stretching away west to vertiginous
spaces beyond the imagination.
Philadelphia first,
then New York, where Nancy is living.

The Grahls have done well, chemists, merchants, physicians.
Lorenzo and Nancy cross the river, settle
in Jersey, open a grocery store
in Elizabeth.

He writes how he laughed,
"every time my poetical hand weighed out
two ounces of tea, or cut a plug of tobacco
for some cobbler or carter."
Thus amused, he never notices how
people cheat him, take his kindness as weakness
and him for all he is worth—
seven thousand dollars
going, gone.

And Nancy bears him a son,
a last child, christened Charles Grahl
da Ponte
(Lorenzo will always call him Carlo).
What to do to eat?
Teach perhaps?
Italian?
Maybe Latin?
Something will turn up.
There may yet be something good around the corner.

He sells the house
and they return to New York.

There are more corners there.

*

You wake from a dream you cannot remember,
try this setting or that, make odd suggestions,
but nothing speaks.
That wasn't it. The kernel
of meaning is gone, and you are the empty husk.

What was there?
The color of lilacs?
Their scent?
You let your mind go blank but all you have
is a blank mind,
which is all you deserve.

In a bookstore on Broadway . . .
If he has any church or synagogue,
if he believes in anything, feels at home
anywhere, it would be in bookstores.
In a bookstore then, on Broadway, where he is browsing,
he enters into a casual conversation
with a younger man, a stranger.
An idle remark,
an answer, a joke, perhaps, and then an allusion,
a reference,
a password . . .

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It is Clement Moore, the poet, later famous—
he will write "The Night Before Christmas."

They talk of books,
even Italian books and writers. Moore,
in his late twenties, is charmed by the foreign man
in his middle fifties.

His father, Bishop Moore,
is President Moore
of Columbia College.

Clement brings da Ponte
home, and they start a class there in Italian
language and literature.

It's a job,
a respectable calling. He is the *caro maestro*
bringing culture, tradition, refinement,
to these eternally young, impossibly eager
innocents.

This is not what he wanted,
nowhere near what he knows he deserves,
but tolerable.

An end, at least, to the torments
he hasn't deserved either.

A remission then?

Stay there, settle, be content,
we tell him, looking back from the future's heaven
where we know what the gods know.

He won't, can't,
has no idea who he is, what he ought to do,
what he should settle for.

This was the loss
back in Ceneda, that wrenching him from the name
his mother called him.

Why not take the suggestion
the country offers, however absurd? The country
is large, limitless, strange, a great slattern
welcoming any and all. His in-laws have moved
to Sunbury, a Pennsylvania town
but frontier still, on the Susquehanna River.
Why not go there, trade, sell liquor, grain,
spices, medicines?

The woods are rich in game,
the water clear as Como or Garda. They move,
to start a new life in a new place
to put down roots and end,
these vicissitudes, this endless turning over
of new pages.

The book still reads the same,
a brief prospering, then the slipping away
of gains, the always innocent lamb
swindlers recognize as a gift
from God or the devil for them to fleece.

A terrible businessman! He folds,
goes to Philadelphia. She sells hats;
he teaches, or tries to,

finds two pupils,
only two,
while a stern landlady drills
for the rent, the rent, the rent.

Nothing is changed.
Soon he is selling his books again,
his clothing . . .

A letter comes
from Moore, in New York, a reprieve, an invitation
to come back, teach there.

He has learned and accepts.
Or is it a temporizing, a compromise,
a tactical, provisional retreat?

It is hard to say what's in his mind, but he stays,
lives in New York for another nineteen years
and dies there.

But all the time, in his heart
is the feeling children have
that none of this is real, or if it is
then only for now. Something will happen, new
teeth will come in, bones grow, hair will grow,
there will be changes: a real self, a real world
will emerge in which I will be no longer a stranger
even to myself.

It is 1819.
He is sixty years old.
That adolescence children wait for
in snug cocoons of latency has come
and gone.

There are only disimprovements now
in body and spirit, a settling

for what is,
a recognition that this ill-fitting garment
is what the wardrobe holds.
There is nothing to grow into
but a shroud.

*

We learn to bear even this, settle, accept,
who have never scribbled a clever verse and heard it
set by Mozart . . .

A gift, but also a burden.
This is what God would demand, if there were a god;
this is your authentic self, your talent,
your spirit's heritage.

Weep, then, weep, and dream unbearable dreams
of that life you ought to have led, the amazing work
you ought to have done, the gift you betrayed, and still,
with every breath betray, deny, dishonor.

Look to an empty sky, leaden and low,
and wait for some sign, hope for a dispensation
that has come before and could therefore come again.

It will not come to you.
You have had your chance.

*

But Byron's poem.

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Da Ponte's son Joseph has died,
at twenty-one of consumption.
Prostrate, all but maddened by grief,
Nancy goes into a deep depression.
Lorenzo
is not in much better case.
One of his students,
hoping to cheer him,
distract him,
offer him solace,
hands him a copy of Byron's recent piece,
in terza rima
(in English!).
It is a curiosity
that speaks deeply, curiously, to da Ponte's
grief—
"The Prophecy of Dante."

This poem, Byron wrote in Ravenna, where Dante's
tomb is "one of the principal objects of interest . . .
both to the native and to the stranger."
An exile from England,
Byron had been drawn to Dante's plight
in exile from Florence.
The wars of griefs and angers, Dante's and Byron's,
da Ponte knew, how
"sometimes the last pangs of a vile foe
Writhe in a dream before me and o'er-arch
My brow with hopes of triumph—let them go!
Such are the last infirmities of those
Who long have suffered more than mortal woe,
and yet, being mortal still, have no repose . . ."

The feeling Byron had of being cheated
of what he deserved, by rank and talent, he gave
to Dante, but da Ponte could claim for himself
a little of that. At his tomb, too, would
"pilgrims come from climes where they have known
The name of him, who now is but a name,
And wasting homage o'er the sullen stone,
Spread his—by him unheard, unheeded—fame."

He'll do it! He'll do . . . what? Translate the thing
into Italian, into what terza rima
ought to be. He'll claim the piece for himself.
And does, throwing himself into the work,
and writing with tears streaming down to blur
the words on the page:
"to die is nothing; but to wither thus,
to tame / My mind down
from its own infinity, / To live
in narrow ways with little men,
A common sight to every common eye,
A wanderer,
while even wolves can find a den . . ."
Oh, yes, *o si, si* . . .

He publishes, and at length receives a letter
from Giagomo Ombrosi, the vice-consul
in Florence, who says a copy was given to Byron
in Leghorn, and the poet
(having taken a villa there for his friend
the Countess
Teresa Guiccioli) received the book
"with much satisfaction."

Si.

*

He becomes, in 1825, Professor
of Italian at Columbia College—no
stipend, but the title is useful. He can
take in pupils, to Nancy's boarding house,
and make a dollar—
he'll lose, of course, as an impresario, bringing
an opera company over to New York.

In 1828, he becomes
a citizen—a gain, and also a loss,
an acknowledgment.

Nancy dies in 1831. Da Ponte lives on
to 1839. Nearly ninety,
he fails, fades away, sends for a priest,
for form's sake at least.
They keep it quiet
that he, too, is a priest.

"I dreamt of roses and laurels," he wrote,
"but from the roses I had only thorns,
and from the laurels bitterness."

Back in Ceneda,
by now merged with the neighboring Serravalle
into Vittorio Veneto, they name
a street
the Via da Ponte.

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Blaming Columbus

by Christie Davies

Krystyna Jachniewicz-Zarebski

The news that politically correct groups in the United States are greeting the 500th anniversary of Columbus' discovery of America by denouncing the great explorer as an imperialist exploiter has been greeted with incredulity and derision in Europe. After all, had he not discovered America, there would be no tax-fed intelligentsia of progressive Americans to denounce him. They would not, as their own jargon has it, have been called into existence. At the very most the year 1992 of the Christian calendar of Europe might have seen mild protests in Oaxaca about the ritual cutting out of human hearts in the Aztec capital. More outrageously, a debating society in Cuzco might have had the temerity to suggest that the vigorous suppression of unnatural vice under the strict laws of the Inca Empire was an unjust repression of the indigenous traditions of its subject peoples. After all, if you can eat peyote . . . . It is even possible that the Cherokees, if untouched by the treacheries of Jacksonian democracy would have been boycotting Eskimo-carved walrus tusks as a protest against whale hunting by kayak. But enough, Columbus did discover America and it was settled by the Spaniards and the Portuguese, the Swedes and the Irish, the Ukrainians and the Ashkenazi Jews, all of whom would have starved at home had there been no New World for them to emigrate to.

Christie Davies is a professor of sociology at the University of Reading, England.

A movement of peoples on this kind of scale necessarily involves the displacement and disturbance of autochthonous aboriginal peoples, but the whole of human history consists of such movements. Why should we single out Columbus for calumny when we do not condemn the Arabs who erupted from their desert peninsula to occupy and dominate all the lands between Spain and Babylon, or the Chinese who have swamped their less numerous neighbors—the Mongols, Tibetans, Uighurs, and Tartars—by sheer weight of numbers, backed by force? The answer is, of course, that the politically correct liberals of America are racists, and Columbus was the wrong color. Accordingly he is to blame, even for the dire but accidental importation of Old World diseases such as small pox, which decimated the Amerindians who lacked any resistance to them. It was the equivalent of the Black Death in Medieval Europe that killed between a third and a half of the population, after the opening up of trade routes to China permitted the spread of plague. Blaming Columbus for this is like blaming the Africans for unleashing AIDS on the world.

The campaign against Columbus is but the latest manifestation of the long held anti-Catholic and anti-Spanish bigotry that lurks throughout American history. True, Columbus was from Genoa and may even have come from a Jewish family, but his expedition was sponsored and financed by the Catholic rulers of a newly united Spain, and his voyage led to the creation of a Spanish empire in the New World, which

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the United States later helped to dismantle. The Monroe doctrine, the Spanish-American War and the American government's indifference to the persecution of religion in Spain and Mexico in the 1930's are all part of the same anti-Spanish and anti-Catholic pattern. Theodore Roosevelt galloped uphill and Franklin D. wheelchaired down, but the man with the big stick and the self-styled good neighbor shared the same prejudices.

It appears odd at first that those who denounce Spain as the cruel land of Ferdinand and Isabella, the Spanish Inquisition, bullfights and Franco, are also in favor of the increased use of Spanish in American schools and public life, even though it is the biggest barrier to the social and economic rise of the Hispanics. But all becomes clear if we look at the history and politics of America's southern neighbor, Mexico. In Mexico, anti-Americanism coupled with a rejection of the language of the Anglos and gringos coexists with an official ideology that is more fiercely anti-Spaniard and anticlerical than anything to be found in the United States. The Spanish language is emphasized there both as the unifier of Mexico and as a means of undermining the United States, particularly those states that once belonged to Mexico. By contrast, the Spaniards and their religion are viewed negatively as the forces against which Mexico's ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party defines itself. The brutal and oppressive Aztecs who culled their subject peoples for human sacrifices are honored and celebrated in lavish museums of anthropology, but the Conquistadors and the friars who accompanied them are slandered in modern Marxist murals. It was not by chance that Trotsky was assassinated in Mexico City. Both he and his murderers felt at home there. In Mexico every last ugly heathen ruin is a subject of government preservation and veneration, but the baroque churches that are the true artistic glory of the country are either sadly neglected or their restoration has been financed by foreigners. The dark idols to whom men were sacrificed have been set above the monuments that commemorate God's sacrifice for man. Do we really prefer this to Columbus? ◁©▷

E i morti risorgeranno

by Roberto Mussapi

And the dead will rise again in brief splendor
opened upon the eyes from the shutters flung wide,
overcoming the sound of the usual awakening
within time's secret, between clock-hands and hour
their light will fall plumb on the eyes newborn.
And the body, rolling there in the snowy white
covered by the cold that kept it alive,
will rise from the now loathsome pallet
opening the window just one hand
will clutch the handle like another hand
unknown, from the cold
in the circle of the dead seasons and the dim blood,
the grace that came before the newborn footprints
and gave back to dust the ancient breath
plunged the eyes of the living into the abysmal well
and in the waters oblivion and memory melted together.

Through the wire that goes on barb after barb
pass the years and the images in the dark
of any wire, wounds of light,
and the hindsight in the early morning's last sleep
gave birth to shorter dreams in bright sips
when the eyes pushed back the initial awakening
remaining shut on the winged images,
souls in the shape of swallows or child
from the roofs, keepers of the breathing rest
that came down to visit the eyelid and the dream
and got into the memory of the man who was asleep
and was close to his death and was saved
by the dead risen again in the eternal splendor.

(Translated by Angelo Canavesi)

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Margaret Fuller in Rome

by E. Christian Kopff

"Oh Rome! my country! city of the soul!
The orphans of the heart must turn to thee!"
—Lord Byron, Child Harold's Pilgrimage

Krystyna Jachniewicz-Zarebski

What is the greatest lost work of ancient literature? Was it Arctinus' epic *Aethiopis*, which told of the battles of Achilles against Penthesilea, the Amazon Queen, and Memnon, black King of the Ethiopians? Was it Ovid's tragedy *Medea*, or Livy's account of the Civil Wars that ended the Roman Republic? In American literature I do not suppose there is much competition with *The History of the Roman Republic of 1848-49* by S. Margaret Fuller, alias Marchioness d'Ossoli.

In her day—she lived from 1810 to 1850—Margaret Fuller was one of the best known intellectuals in America. Her father, Massachusetts Democrat Timothy Fuller, gave his eldest child a man's education: Latin, some Greek, much German, French, and Italian. He was a demanding teacher whose lessons left her with terrifying nightmares. She grew up learned, witty, and physically plain. When she was 25 her father gave up his successful political career to write history. He promptly died of cholera and left the family for her to support. She was up to the challenge. Her famous "Conversations" attracted Bostonian ladies of culture to the Peabody sisters' bookstore, where they paid twenty dollars a head to hear Margaret lecture on subjects from Goethe to Greek mythology. Afterwards they would browse through the bookstore looking for books she had mentioned, including her own translation of *Eckermann's Conversations with Goethe*. The Conversation on Greek mythology was so popular she was persuaded to repeat it for men.

In 1840 she became the first editor of the Transcendentalists' short-lived journal *The Dial*, for which she wrote her famous feminist essay "The Great Lawsuit: Man vs. Men, Woman vs. Women." She expanded the essay into a best-selling book, *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* (1845). Horace Greeley lured her from Boston to write social and literary criticism for his New York *Daily Tribune*. She mingled articles on poverty, prostitution, and women's rights with praise of Emerson, Hawthorne, and Poe and condemnation of James Russell Lowell and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. Today these assessments are standard, but then her comments on Longfellow created a sensation.

Her emotional life was equally unconventional. In 1840 she lived for a while at Emerson's home. (A strange man named Henry David Thoreau was staying there, too.) Emerson and Fuller were so aroused by each other that they could not converse, but retired to their respective bedrooms to pen impassioned letters back and forth. In New York she lived at Horace Greeley's house. They were close, though not romantically involved. She fell in love with a footloose immigrant, James Nathan, who, when they broke up, refused to return her love letters without suitable financial remuneration, which Margaret refused to pay—or could not.

At 35 she talked Greeley into financing a trip to Europe in return for 15 long articles for the *Tribune*. *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* had made her a celebrity in England, and she

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was invited everywhere. We finally have adequate editions of her *Tribune* articles in Larry K. Reynolds and Susan Belasco Smith's *"These Sad But Glorious Days": Dispatches from Europe* (Yale, 1991), and her letters up to 1849 in five volumes by Robert N. Hudspeth (Cornell, 1983-88). Both sources tell us of her meetings with Thomas Carlyle. She expected the sage of *Sartor Resartus*. She met a bitter, angry, though witty man and his sad, frustrated wife. Carlyle expected a frigid New England schoolmarm and discovered instead a cultured and brilliant conversationalist who knew German as well as he did. He soon tired of the wealthy Quakers who were serving as her chaperones. They *would* go on about slavery, while he wanted to talk about masters and heroes. During their debates, Margaret was meeting Giuseppe Mazzini, intellectual leader of the fight for a united republican Italy. Many reports describe him as the most beautiful man in Europe. Dressed always in black in mourning for his country, he was vowed to celibacy until Italy was free. The early chapters of his masterpiece, *The Duties of Man*, began by addressing Italian workingmen with the words, "I have come to speak to you of your duties," and only then of their rights. Margaret warmed to him immediately. When years later Mazzini finished *Duties of Man*, he declared the emancipation of woman as important as that of the working class, perhaps under Margaret's influence. Neither could foresee that they were soon to meet again, in Rome.

Margaret went on to Paris and met George Sand, whose latest lover, Frédéric Chopin, was lurking about the house. Sand appears to have been an important influence on Margaret's radicalism. The experience was somewhat spoiled by Margaret's inability to converse in French with the flair she showed in English and the depressing rainy weather. So the Quaker family and Margaret went on to Italy, first to Naples and then to Rome.

Chesterton tells of a man who set sail to find a new country and after many adventures discovered that his new country was England, his own home. *Heureux qui comme Ulisse*. Others have ended up not in England or New England, but Rome. Some of them spend the rest of their lives there, like Margaret's new friends, William Wetmore Story and his wife Evelyn. Story, the son of distinguished jurist Joseph Story, had deserted a promising career in law to move to Rome and become a sculptor. Others return to America, like the great sculptor of the next generation, Augustus Saint Gaudens. After his return he kept the faucets in his New York studio always running, because the sound reminded him of the fountains of Rome. That is the country to which the orphans of the heart must turn, the land of their lost content, and Margaret Fuller was one of them.

Wandering through St. Peter's, she became separated from her Quaker chaperones. While searching for them, she met Giovanni d'Ossoli. He was 25 and handsome as only young Italian men can be, shy and perhaps not very bright, certainly not well educated. Margaret was cultured and inarticulate in five foreign languages. Together they found their way back to her lodgings. For the next few days he showed her around Rome, after which it was time for Margaret and her chaperones to continue on to Milan and Venice. At Venice Margaret parted company with her escorts and headed back south. Margaret's infatuation with Giovanni is enough reason for most biographers. They cannot understand what Rome means to a woman who grew up reading Vergil and Livy. There may have been another reason. Margaret was a born newspaperwoman—that Horace Greeley knew—and in Rome was the story of a lifetime.

In 1846, only a year before, the aged Pontiff Gregory XVI had passed away, after inspiring some of the most brilliant anticlerical poetry ever penned, the sonnets of G. G. Belli, written in *Romanaccio*, the dialect of Rome. All Europe knew A Dog's Life: *"Nun fa mmai ggnente er Papa, eh? nun fa ggnente?"* ("Duh Pope he don't do nuttin'? Whaddya mean, he don't do nuttin'?" and so on to detail the leisurely schedule of a modern Bishop of Rome). The Consistory voted for a young moderate, Giovanni Mastai, as Pope Pius IX. Pio Nono was inspired by the Abbé Gioberti's vision of an Italy cleansed from foreign domination and reunited under Papal Supremacy to enjoy her old cultural hegemony in Europe. Reform would proceed hand in hand with tradition and without the need of republicanism, revolution, or communism. The new Pope granted a constitution, allowed the formation of a *Guardia civica* (what we would call "a well-regulated militia"), and even the appointment of lay ministers among his advisors. Italy rang with the cry, "Viva Pio Nono!"

William and Evelyn Story were amazed at the Margaret they saw in the fall of 1847. She was a changed woman, almost beautiful. They never even considered that there are things besides Rome and liberal politics that can produce a woman's rosy cheeks. The glorious fall became a rainy December. Margaret grew depressed and the bloom faded from her cheeks. She awoke every morning feeling sick to her stomach. George Sand had neglected to mention this aspect of living life to the full. Margaret Fuller was pregnant.

Chesterton tells of a man who set sail to find a new country and after many adventures discovered that his new country was England, his own home. *Heureux qui comme Ulisse.* Others have ended up not in England or New England, but Rome.

Margaret had long since rejected traditional Christianity—who among her friends had not?—but part of her was still a Puritan. She was convinced that she was going to die in childbirth. Giovanni proposed but she declined. It was not that she was too old to give him children. That objection was now resolved. She was, however, as the Ossoli family still put it a century later, "old, ugly, Protestant, and poor." Marriage to a Protestant required a Papal dispensation and his hostile older brother, now head of the family, was not inclined to give his assent. In addition, Giovanni had joined the *Guardia civica*, a virtual proclamation of republican sympathies and the Ossoli family blamed Margaret.

Giovanni did not share Margaret's depression. He explained that under Italian law he could recognize his baby, give the boy (as he was sure it would be) his name, and even baptize him without marrying the mother. It is doubtful whether these legal details soothed Margaret's anxious heart. She left Rome to

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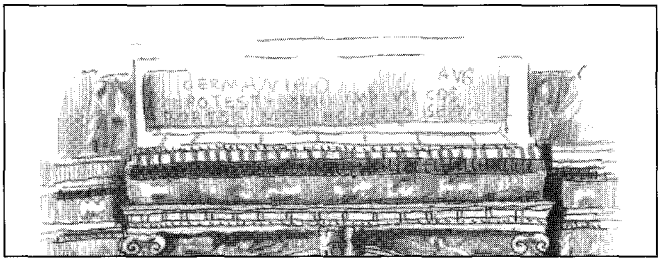
bear her child in seclusion, pleading ill health, while Giovanni stayed with his regiment in Rome.

Horace Greeley was not sympathetic. It was the spring of 1848 and all Europe was exploding with revolution. In France Louis Philippe fell and Metternich was chased from Vienna. The Austrian hold over northern Italy was shaken. Milan and Venice declared themselves republics and King Carlo Alberto of Piedmont was doing his clumsy best to liberate the north from Austria. Ferdinando II, Bourbon King of Naples and the Two Sicilies, granted his people a constitution. Pius IX was excited to see foreign rule disappearing from Italy but not enthusiastic about the rise of republicanism. Giovanni procured a leave to be with Margaret at the birth of their son, Angelo (April 1848). In the fall, Margaret left Angelino with a wet nurse and returned to Rome. There was much to write about, and Margaret's dispatches for the *Tribune* in 1848-49 are important historical documents. Perry Miller thought them her best writing.



The Pope's chief minister was a layman, the cultured, eloquent Count Pellegrino Rossi, but he was widely hated for a simple reason: he was opposed to both reaction and revolution. For him as for his Pope, the road to progress and freedom involved slow reform that maintained continuity and tradition. The followers of Mazzini called Rossi a "tyrant." Their leader was the huge demagogue Angelo Brunetti, better known as Ciceruacchio, the big, fat, filthy Cicero. On November 15, 1848, Rossi rode to the Cancelleria, the beautiful High Renaissance building near the Campo dei Fiori where the popular assembly was to meet. As the count stepped out of his coach, Ciceruacchio's son Luigi stabbed him to death. The noisy crowd fell silent. The Papal troops did nothing. Margaret Fuller rejoiced. "For me," she wrote her mother, "I never thought to have heard of a violent death with satisfaction, but this act affected me as one of terrible justice." Garibaldi noted in his diary his pleasure at the death of the "tyrant," then recalled that he was opposed on principle to capital punishment. Such second thoughts were rare among the Mazzinians, who marched through Rome arm in arm, hymning the death of moderation. (In distant Concord, Henry Thoreau was composing the lecture later published as "Civil Disobedience.") That evening a crowd marched on the Pope's residence, the Quirinal Palace, and in panic the Swiss Guard opened fire. Pius IX wanted to be neither murderer nor victim. On the evening of November 24, disguised as a simple priest, he fled to Gaeta on the coast halfway between Rome and Bourbon Naples. Margaret was furious. There were two types of people who would not go along with Mazzini, the weak and the wicked. In her gentler moments, she called Pio Nono weak.

She was also indignant because the American ambassador refused to recognize the newly constituted Roman Republic. If only she were ambassador, but she was a woman. In a century things would be different. (Indeed, in 1953 President Eisenhower appointed Clare Boothe Luce ambassador to Italy. What would Margaret have thought of "The Women?") Recognition was hardly enough for Margaret Fuller. She wanted the United States to intervene to support the Roman Republic. Her radicalization was proceeding apace. She even had a kind word for the Abolitionists, whom she admitted she could not stand when forced to live among them. Meanwhile, Mazzini entered Rome in triumph.

While this was going on, the French people voted, by an enormous majority and by universal adult suffrage that did not exist in England or the United States, to elect Louis Napoleon their president. Napoleon had no intention of leaving Rome in the hands of Mazzini and Garibaldi and soon French troops were approaching the walls of Rome. The trees of Rome were chopped down to prevent sniper fire. ("I could not, could not," sobbed Margaret.) Famous villas were destroyed before and during the fighting. Resistance seemed hopeless, but Mazzini wanted Rome martyred and he got his wish. The city fell in June 1849 for many reasons, among them Garibaldi's insubordination and reckless though courageous tactics. Mazzini and Garibaldi went into exile; Pius IX returned. Margaret, Giovanni, and little Angelino fled north to Florence, which she detested. ("It seems like Boston to me.") As impoverished exiles, their only hope was to sail to America. It was time to tell people about the baby.

The Storys were thunderstruck. How had she kept the secret so long from them? Margaret had told only one close friend. She had written to her brother Richard, but burnt the letter. In one letter to her mother, she had compared herself to Mary Magdalene and asked forgiveness "because she had loved much." It was not just that she was a "Fallen Woman." The Ossoli family chapel was in the baroque church of la Maddelena, a short block from the Pantheon. In the end she had not been able to write the words and had to write them now, in late 1849 from Florence. Giovanni was doing his best to learn English, without much success. Margaret tried to prepare her family and friends. During her pregnancy she had corresponded with him in Italian. She, who read so many languages so fluently, made every kind of mistake in speaking and writing. We can deduce from her Italian letters what Giovanni's English was like.

Amid all the unhappiness she felt the joys of family life. Edgar Allan Poe, news of whose death reached her in Florence, had quipped that the human race was divided into three sexes: men, women, and Margaret Fuller. Italy had turned Margaret into a woman, a mother, and a wife. More or less a wife, at any rate. One of the many mysteries surrounding Margaret Fuller is her marriage. Did she and Giovanni ever tie the knot and if so, when? Evelyn Story says she was shown the marriage certificate and no one doubts that she thought she saw it. Margaret was convinced that her new family's love and her now completed history of the Roman Republic would enable them to weather all storms. One storm she did not foresee: just off Fire Island, within sight of New York, a hurricane hit their vessel and sank it with all on board. Margaret, Giovanni, and her precious manuscript were never found. Only a baby's body, little Angelino, was recovered, to find peace at last in American soil.

Her Transcendentalist friends breathed a sigh of relief. They were not ready for George Sand in America, and her husband was no De Musset or Chopin. They were sure that

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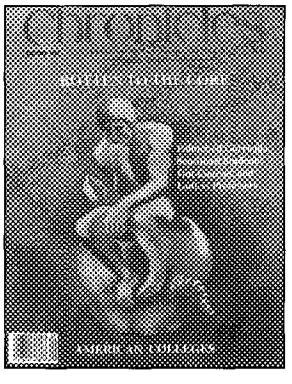
he was no nobleman, wrongly. It is somewhat droll to see Margaret's modern defenders insist that she was a radical feminist democrat who slept only with a true scion of the Roman nobility.

Around Margaret hangs always the fascinating aura of the *opus imperfectum*. Her best writing is found in her letters and her articles, literary and historical, for Greeley's *Tribune*. She wrote *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* before her style had been pruned by writing for Greeley, and it lacks the charm and character of Emerson or Thoreau. The content, however, anticipates contemporary feminism in almost every area, from her insistence that women can hold men's jobs, even be ship captains, to her belief that women's moral sense is distinct from men's.

Would her history have won her the place in American literature she was sure of? She called it "a possession forever for man," echoing a famous phrase of Thucydides. In her best literary essay for Greeley, she had discussed American historians, praising Prescott for the readableness of his great histories of the Spanish conquest of America, but she was bothered by his lack of a guiding idea, a lack she found filled in Bancroft's work. The people, democracy, would have been her guiding idea, and she had a hero in Mazzini. Would the impartiality that Thucydides claimed to possess have replaced the partisan attitude of her newspaper articles? We know from comparing her letters with the articles that she often knew better. In the *Tribune* she insists on the unanimity of popular support for the republic. In her last letter to Emerson she tells of visiting the wounded during the siege of Rome. Her knowledge of languages proved useful because the soldiers came from all over Europe. "Indeed, I am afraid that it is too true that there are comparatively few Romans." When she described Garibaldi leading his troops out from the Square of St. John Lateran, she railed at those who called them "brigands and vagabonds." In an earlier letter to Giovanni she wrote that Garibaldi had little control over *questi desperati di sua banda*, "these desperadoes in his band," who were murdering priests, civilians, and one another. Could she have included such observations in her account of an event that had given her so much hope and so much heartache?

This is only one of the questions about Margaret Fuller that we cannot answer. There are many others. Would she have raised little Angelino as her father had raised her? Can we trust the partial pictures of her we find in female characters in Hawthorne's *Blithedale Romance* and *Marble Faun* and Henry James' *Bostonians*? Did she ever feel at home in the world? This last question I think we can answer. Writing from Rome she often quoted Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, always in the same way: "Oh Rome! my country!" with "my" underlined, against the meter. She knew what she was doing. The orphans of the heart know how to scan their own poetry, as they know their own country, no matter how late in life they come to it or how little time it is granted them to stay there. ◈



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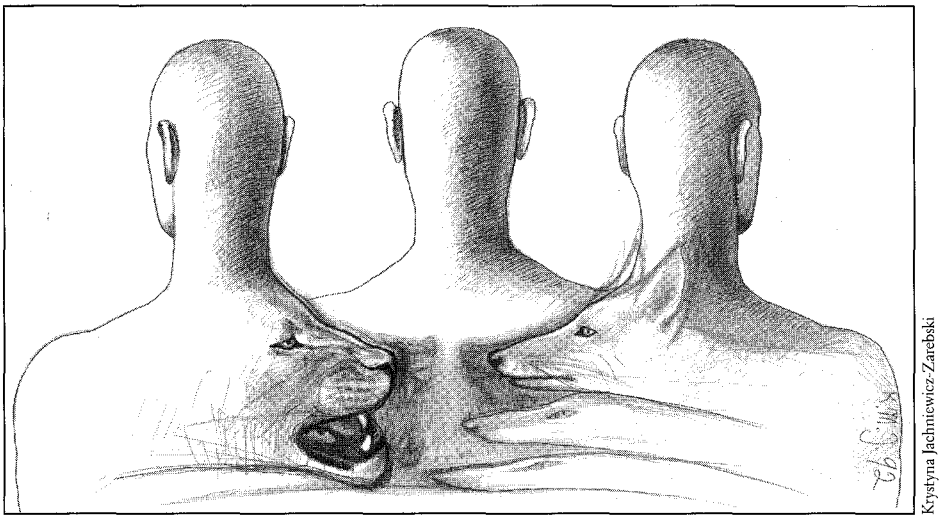
Crime Story

The Godfather as Political Metaphor

by Samuel Francis



Krystyna Iachniewicz-Zarebski

Probably not since Margaret Mitchell's *Gone With the Wind* has a popular novel influenced Americans as deeply as Mario Puzo's *The Godfather*. Appearing in 1969, the book remains, according to the inflated come-on of its publisher's blurb, "the all-time best-selling novel in publishing history." If true, that claim in itself is no mean accomplishment, considering that Mr. Puzo's competitors have included such deep-pocketed wonderboys of the book trade as Stephen King, Harold Robbins, and the late Isaac Asimov.

Yet the permeation of pop culture by *The Godfather* is not measured by its publishers' ledgers. The novel has given its name to a national pizza chain, suggesting that even the teenagers who habitually consume pasta for the masses still readily recognize the literary allusion; and twenty years after the release of the first of Francis Ford Coppola's three movies based on it, the book's major characters and events remain familiar to millions of Americans. Moreover, the book and films excited mass interest in the subject of organized crime in the United States and spawned entire new shelves of reading, fiction and nonfiction, as well as inevitable and innumerable cinematic spin-offs, almost all of which are thin reruns of the novel's distinctive characterization of criminal intrigue as delicate family matters. The novel and films contributed to American colloquialism almost as much as the Watergate scandal, which was contemporaneous with the first two movies. Even today, expressions such as "an offer he can't refuse" and "sleeping with the fishes" remain current, and common words such as "godfather" and "don" acquired new and enduring meanings from the *Godfather* cycle. Coppola and Puzo together have turned out almost as many movies based on the epic of *la famiglia Corleone* as there have been trials for John Gotti, though with the third installment released in 1990 and its final liquidation of the dwindling band of characters who had not been shot, eviscerated, blown up, or garroted in the first two films, it is hard to see how even Hollywood can come up with any more.

Long dismissed as a cheap glamorization of organized crime, a 450-page sex-and-violence wallow in the pigpen of mass culture, *The Godfather* has nevertheless evolved into no less a classic than *Gone With the Wind* itself, though it would be idle to pretend that Puzo's contribution to literature ranks with the work of the more serious novelists in the American canon. The book is dependent on sensationalism, with graphic depictions of bedroom tussles and physical brutality and a reliance on the improbable that always attends low fiction. Nevertheless, there are in both the novel and in at least the first two Godfather movies consistent, disturbing, and powerfully presented themes that deserve closer inspection than the literary merits of the book suggest. Read or viewed not simply as thrillers for beach and boudoir but as an extended metaphor of American and perhaps of human society, the novel and Parts I and II of the film series rip the mask off certain mythologies of America and modernity and offer perceptions that may reveal truths that no grand jury and no congressional subpoena has uncovered as successfully or dramatically.

"Crime," wrote Daniel Bell, "in many ways, is a Coney Island mirror, caricaturing the morals and manners of a society." Just as anthropologists glimpse in the cultures of primitive peoples persistent truths of human nature and society obscured by the more complicated institutions of modern life, so the brutally simple relationships among criminals expose and highlight similar patterns on which all human social and political institutions rest. The bloody antics of mafiosi and their molls may amuse, titillate, and horrify the readers of the tabloid press, and Puzo's novel, to be sure, lends them a dignity that in real life they neither possess nor ought to acquire. But far from merely romanticizing and whitewashing organized crime in America, *The Godfather* uses it as the center of

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a symbolic complex of primal patterns out of which modern Western society grows and from recognition of which the characteristic superstitions of modernity usually flee.

"Behind every great fortune there is a crime," wrote Honoré de Balzac in a cynical sentiment that Puzo chose as the epigraph of his novel. The line at once establishes the metaphor that dominates the book as well as the films and carries us into the essentially Machiavellian world view that pervades them and to which most of its Italian-American characters subscribe. If "great fortunes" may be read as "human society" itself, then the history of crime becomes the history of society. *The Godfather* thus begins with not merely an analogy between the warfare and power struggles among criminals on the one hand, and the more normal civil relationships of legitimate society on the other, but also with an actual genealogy that traces the latter to their origins in force and fraud.

Nor is the line from Balzac the only way the crime-society metaphor is established. Throughout the book and films, there is a continuous flow of language and event that suggests the analogy, and the characters themselves frequently invoke it. When Tom Hagen, *consigliore* to Don Vito Corleone, urges his boss and foster parent to accept the offer of a partnership with the Sicilian gangster Sollozzo for peddling drugs, he cites the power practices among real governments. If the Corleone family doesn't accept Sollozzo's bargain, Hagen argues, it will eventually be overwhelmed by the rival families. "It's just like countries," he says. "If they arm, we have to arm. If they become stronger economically, they become a threat to us." The *capo regime* Clemenza, explaining to Michael Corleone why a gang war is necessary, draws his own analogy with pre-World War II diplomacy, in a scene from both book and film. "These things have to happen every ten years or so," muses the corpulent killer. "You gotta stop them at the beginning. Like they shoulda stopped Hitler at Munich, they never should have let him get away with that, they were just asking for big trouble when they let him get away with that."

Yet the clearest such analogy between criminal and legitimate society is voiced by Michael Corleone himself in Part I of the film series. Explaining to his innocent fiancée Kay Adams why the work of his father, one of the most powerful gangsters in the country, is not as sinister as it seems, Michael tells her, "My father is no different than any other powerful man—any man who's responsible for other people, like a senator or a President." It is a comparison that Kay, daughter of a Baptist clergyman from New Hampshire, at once rejects. "Do you know how naive you sound?" she asks in the naively preachy way such women affect. "Senators and Presidents don't have men killed"—a line that, when the movie is shown in crowded American theaters, never fails to collapse the audience into derisive laughter. Whatever the veracity of the crime-society metaphor, apparently a lot of Americans, at least in the Watergate era, were perfectly comfortable with the notion that it was true.

If the premise of the novel is that the practices of normal or legitimate human society are analogous to those of criminal gangs, it is hardly surprising that the ghost of Machiavelli lurks throughout the novel and films, since the view of political power as essentially extralegal and extramoral is a fundamental theme of Machiavelli's political thought. Though his name is never invoked, there are clear instances of what may well be the direct influence of the Italian political theorist whose name has become (unjustly) synonymous with the synthesis of cunning and brutality. As in Machiavelli's thought, the Prince is not only above the law but the source of law and all social and political order, so in the Corleone universe, the Don is "responsible" for his family, a responsibility that authorizes him to do virtually anything except violate the obligations of the family bond. Michael's description of his father is not only Machiavellian but also virtually Nietzschean. "My father," Michael tells Kay,

> is a businessman trying to provide for his wife and children and those friends he might need someday in a time of trouble. He doesn't accept the rules of the society we live in because those rules would have condemned him to a life not suitable to a man like himself, a man of extraordinary force and character. What you have to understand is that he considers himself the equal of all those great men like Presidents and Prime Ministers and Supreme Court Justices and Governors of the States. He refuses to live by rules set up by others, rules which condemn him to a defeated life. But his ultimate aim is to enter that society with a certain power since society doesn't really protect its members who do not have their own individual power. In the meantime, he operates on a code of ethics he considers far superior to the legal structures of society.

Moreover, Don Corleone's conversation as well as that of Michael and the other mafiosi is full of such homespun amoralisms of power-playing as Machiavelli would have treasured: "Keep your friends close, but your enemies closer"; "Revenge is a dish that tastes best when it is cold"; "a lawyer with his briefcase can steal more than a hundred men with guns"; and so on. They are just the sort of adages that fill the pages of Machiavelli's own works, and they are based on his assumption, which he shares with the Corleone family, that human nature does not change and therefore the natural laws by which human beings gain, use, and lose power remain permanent as well. And not only permanent but universal, so that they apply to the dynamics of Mafia intrigues as much as to the relationships among governments and between governors and governed.

A prince, Machiavelli advises, must know how to imitate the lion and the fox, to use both force and cunning effectively, though it is also clear that most rulers do not know how to do so and rely on one or the other too much. The lion-fox polarity, one of Machiavelli's best known laws of power, is rather clearly manifested in the scene in the novel and Part I of the film series where Don Corleone's sons, Santino and Tom Hagen, argue over how to respond to the attempted assassination of the Don and the attack on their family. Santino, a headstrong and violent young man, is eager to "go to the mattresses" in an all-out war with the rival gangs who back his father's enemy Sollozzo. Notorious even in Mafia circles for his hot temper and taste for violence, Santino is the lion, and indeed the name "Corleone" can be translated as "Lionheart." Hagen, an adopted son of the Godfather, is not Sicilian but German-Irish; he counsels prudence and further negotiations. If Santino is the lion, Hagen is the fox, and the conflict between them appears to be a stalemate.

It is then that Michael, the Don's youngest son, who was not raised to take part in the family's criminal affairs, injects him-

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self for the first time into "family business." His plan is simple. Sollozzo won't suspect Michael, precisely because Michael has nothing to do with the family's activities. Michael proposes to accept Sollozzo's offer of a meeting on neutral ground for the ostensible purpose of negotiating, but Michael will smuggle a gun into the meeting and kill Sollozzo. It is a plan that combines the cunning of the fox and the violence of the lion, transcending the polarity that divides and debilitates Santino and Hagen, revealing Michael as the ideal Machiavellian prince, and initiating him into the course that will bring him to power as his father's avenger and successor.

Similarly, the role of religion in the novel and particularly in the films also illustrates Machiavellian themes. Religion for Puzo and Coppola appears to have two applications: as a mask behind which criminality hides and as a sop for women, children, and unmanly men. The irony of the title of "Godfather" itself points to the former use, as does the powerful climactic scene in Part I when Michael, literally becoming godfather to the child of his treacherous brother-in-law through the sacrament of baptism, renounces Satan and all his works while at the same moment his assassins cut down his enemies, making him the new Godfather on another level of meaning.

The use of religion as a Machiavellian mask is continued and intensified in Part II, where the repulsive Don Fannucci of the Black Hand ostentatiously offers a large cash donation to the Catholic Church and deplores the violence of a Punch and Judy show, even as the young Vito Corleone stalks him during a religious festival in the streets, using the celebration of the Mass as a distraction to kill Fannucci and initiate his own rise to power. Indeed, throughout both films there is not one religious ceremony or its social celebration that does not serve as a mask for crime: the wedding reception sequence that opens Part I, during which Don Corleone plans crimes on behalf of his retainers; the baptism scene at the end of the film as well as the funeral of Don Corleone, when the late Don's *capo regime* Tessio betrays Michael; the confirmation of Michael's own son in Nevada at the beginning of Part II; and the funeral of Michael's mother toward the end of Part II, when Michael gives the order for the murder of his brother Fredo. This pattern is generally evident in the book as well, and in describing the grand meeting of the heads of the nation's crime families in the book, Puzo tells us with irony that "it must be noted that some of these men were religious and believed in God."

Indeed, the only grown man in either the book or the films who takes religion at all seriously is Fredo himself, who, as Michael describes him, is "weak and stupid." Just before his own assassination in Part II, Fredo plans a fishing trip with Michael's son, and Fredo assures the boy that the way to catch a fish is to say a Hail Mary when he drops the line in the water. As Fredo sits in the boat repeating his prayers, Michael's gunman blows his brains out from behind.

The Godfather's general use of religion is virtually identical to the advice offered by Machiavelli to the Prince that "it is well to seem merciful, faithful, humane, sincere, religious, and also to be so; but you must have the mind so disposed that when it is needful to be otherwise you may be able to change to the opposite qualities," his belief, based on his reading of Roman religion, that "everything that tends to favor religion (even though it were believed to be false) should be received and availed of to strengthen it," and the saying of Cosmo de Medici, quoted by Machiavelli in his *History of Florence*, that "it required something more to direct a government than to play with a string of [rosary] beads." Rome itself occasionally is invoked in both book and films, as when Michael notes that Santino is scribbling down the names of men to be killed "as if he were some newly crowned Roman emperor."

Yet while the book proceeds from the premise that legitimate society and criminal gangs are analogous, it is at once evident that there is also a difference between them. In the course of his daughter's wedding reception, Don Corleone has the duty of meeting with and granting favors to many friends and relatives. The first of the men to approach him is an undertaker, Amerigo Bonasera, who tearfully complains that his daughter has been attacked. Bonasera is an immigrant and has tried all his life to be a good American, as his first name implies. He has obeyed the law and raised his daughter as a respectable young woman. Recently, she dated a young man, the son of a U. S. Senator, who tried to seduce her. When she rejected his advances, her date and a friend beat her savagely, sending her to the hospital and permanently disfiguring her features.

Being a good American, Bonasera went to the police and brought charges against his daughter's assailants. The scoundrels were convicted. But because of their fathers' political influence, the judge gave them only a suspended sentence, and they smirked at Bonasera as they left the courtroom. Now he comes to Don Corleone.

The Don's response conveys the principal expression of the moral code of the book and, even more, the films. Bonasera is not a friend of the Don. In all the years they have known each other, Bonasera avoided his company, never invited him to his house, never did him a favor or asked a favor of him. That's all right with the Don, but now, all of a sudden, Bonasera comes to him and asks him, in return for money, to commit murder. The Don refuses, his dignity wounded by Bonasera's tasteless insult.

Bonasera wanted to be an American, and he turned his back on his cultural heritage and his natural friends. "America," he moans, "has been good to me. I wanted to be a good citizen. I wanted my child to be American." And, of course, he wanted American justice, which is exactly what he got. "You never armed yourself with true friends," the Don tells him. "After all, the police guarded you, there were courts of law, you and yours could come to no harm. You did not need Don Corleone." But now, when the fake, purchased justice of America has failed him, to whom does he turn? Don Corleone's sarcastic advice is that Bonasera accept the judgment of the American court and give up his idea of revenge. "The judge has ruled. America has ruled," he says. The notion of vengeance for a wrong suffered by a family member is "not American." Best for Amerigo Bonasera to give it up.

America, as the Don describes it and as Bonasera has experienced it, does not behave like the Corleone family after all, and the differences between the two societies do not favor America. The differences between the two are precisely those between two kinds of social organization that sociologists describe as *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* respectively. *Gemeinschaft* refers to a kind of culture characteristic of primitive, agrarian, tribal societies, in which bonds of kinship, blood relationship, feudal ties, social hierarchy, deference, honor, and friendship are the norm. "The three pillars of *Gemeinschaft*—

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blood, place (land), and mind, or kinship, neighborhood, and friendship—are all encompassed in the family," wrote the German sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies, who first used this terminology, "but the first of them is the constituting element of it. . . . The prototype of the association in *Gemeinschaft* remains the relationship between master and servant or, better, between master and disciple." Tönnies saw the *Gemeinschaft* pattern as dominant in the European Middle Ages but as slowly disappearing before the revolutionary changes brought about by the rise of the *Gesellschaft* pattern in the process of modernization.

"Conversely" to *Gemeinschaft*, writes Robert Nisbet, "*Gesellschaft* . . . reflects the modernization of European society. . . . In pure *Gesellschaft*, which for Tönnies is symbolized by the modern economic enterprise and the network of legal and moral relations in which it resides, we move to association that is no longer cast in the mold of either kinship or friendship. . . . The essence of *Gesellschaft* is rationality and calculation," an essence expressed in such modern organizations as corporations (for which *Gesellschaft* is the German word) and the formal, impersonal, legalistic, bureaucratic organization of the modern state.

It is a principal thesis of *The Godfather* that American society is a *Gesellschaft* at war with the *Gemeinschaft* inherent in the extended families of organized crime, and it is the claim of the novel and even more intensely of the films that the truly natural, legitimate, normal, and healthy type of society is that of the gangs. It is a claim buttressed by the savage depictions not only of the corrupt justice offered by America to Bonasera but also of virtually every character in both book and films who is not Sicilian and therefore is not part of the criminal *Gemeinschaft*: Kay Adams herself, the liberal WASP college girl who has no conception of the brutal forces that lie under and around her small social island; Jack Woltz, the vulgar and sex-obsessed Hollywood producer; Captain McCluskey, the crooked Irish cop who is in the pay of Sollozzo; Moe Greene, the Las Vegas gangster based on Bugsy Siegel; and in Part II of the film series, Nevada Senator Pat Geary and Hyman Roth, a fictionalized version of the late Meyer Lansky. Roth indeed is the most articulate and attractive of these representatives of the American *Gesellschaft*, and except for Kay, who is merely a child, most of them share certain characteristics. All of them are motivated mainly by avarice, and the cash bond is the only one they acknowledge or understand. Most also lack self-control; they lose their tempers unnecessarily and insult and try to cheat men with whom they want to do business, and some are slaves to sexual lusts that the prudish Don Corleone considers *infamia*. Lacking the natural bonds of *Gemeinschaft* through strong family attachments, the characters who represent *Gesellschaft* are bound only by their personal appetites, and it is through their appetites—greed, anger, lust, obsession with revenge served not cold but piping hot—that they usually meet destruction.

By contrast, the *Gemeinschaft* of the Corleone family is embodied in Don Corleone himself, well-known for his humility, his caution, and his devotion to family. "A man who never spends time with his family can never be a real man," he tells his godson, Johnny Fontane, who has been unmanned by Hollywood *Gesellschaft*, but the remark is really addressed to his real son Santino, who is preoccupied with sex. "Even the King of Italy didn't dare to meddle with the relationship of husband and wife," the Don tells his own daughter when she complains that her husband is beating her. Outside the bond of family and friendship, outside the *Gemeinschaft*, Don Corleone believes, man cannot be man, and men who put their trust in the contrary type, represented by the American *Gesellschaft*, have ceased to be fully human and lack the *virtu* that Machiavelli commends. "You can act like a man," the Don roars at Fontane when the singer weeps and whines in despair about his misfortunes.

For all the contrast between legitimate and criminal society, at last, when the final mask is torn off, there is no difference at all; the Corleone family is based on fraud as well as force, and it does indeed melt into and become indistinguishable from America.

These are beliefs deeply shared by Michael Corleone himself, though not at the beginning of the novel, when, telling Kay about his family, he says, "That's my family, Kay. It's not me." Michael enlisted in the Marines in World War II, despite his father's arrangement of a draft deferment for him, to show his rejection of his family and his heritage, and his ambition to go to law school and marry Kay show his aspiration, the same as Bonasera's, to melt into the American pot. Yet blood will tell. The attempted murder of his father and the attack on his family draw Michael naturally back to his roots, and his exile in Sicily completes his assimilation into the *Gemeinschaft* and the ethnic heritage he had rejected.

The polarity of *Gesellschaft* and *Gemeinschaft* is clear in the novel and in Part I of the film series, but in Part II, something else develops, introducing yet another level of meaning. In the book and Part I, the Corleone family is radically distinct from the "normal" *Gesellschaft* society of America. In Part II, however, the family itself is changing, and the evolution is already well under way when the film opens. Divided into flashback scenes describing the youth of Vito Corleone in New York's Little Italy in the 1920's and the main story set in the late 1950's in Nevada and Cuba, much of the film action in Part II plays off corresponding scenes from Part I, and the flashback sequences offer subtle commentaries on sequences from the main story line. The integration of film sequences and plot make brilliantly clear the evolution that is taking place inside the Corleone family itself and in the larger society for which the family remains a metaphor.

Thus, the opening scene in the main story line of Part II is the confirmation of Michael's son, Anthony, in the Catholic Church, a sequence that corresponds to and plays off of the opening wedding sequence from Part I. But while the wedding sequence is an immersion into pure *Gemeinschaft*, the confirmation sequence by contrast reveals that *Gesellschaft* is rapidly catching up with the Corleones. At the wedding, the band is Italian, and the guests sing and dance with the band to traditional Sicilian wedding music. In the confirmation sequence, a professional orchestra and professional dancers perform, and none of the musicians is Italian or knows Italian

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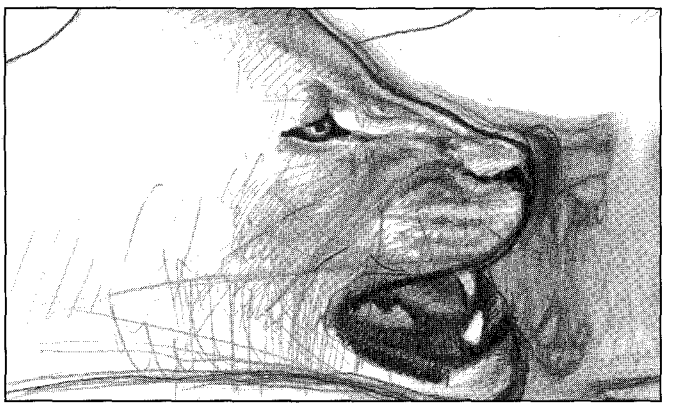
music. At the wedding, the police are kept out of the reception, though they observe the whole celebration from their cars, and Don Corleone's pet judges and politicians are invited but politely decline to attend. At the confirmation, the mafiosi take state troopers plates of food, and the guest of honor is Senator Geary, himself a crook and an almost comic hypocrite. If the family is being corrupted, it is because it is being assimilated into the existing corruption of American *Gesellschaft*.



The whole confirmation sequence, in contrast with that of the wedding sequence in Part I, shows a new twist of the dominant metaphor of the novel and films. The novel and Part I established the metaphor that criminal society is analogous to normal or legitimate society. The point of the metaphor was to offer a critique of normal society, not for its resemblance to criminal society but for its departures from the more natural norms that govern the *Gemeinschaft* of the criminal family. Now, in Part II, the new development is that the family is itself becoming part of the normal society and thereby is being corrupted. A religious sub-metaphor is employed to show the corruption through the confirmation reception; just as the baptism ceremony of Part I made Michael a godfather in both the religious and criminal senses, so the confirmation sequence receives Michael's son into the Church at the same time that the family is received as part of America, as part of the corruptive *Gesellschaft*.

A large part of the conflict in Part II revolves around the antagonism between *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* within and without the family. There is a dual conflict, one between the Corleone family and the *Gesellschaft* syndicate led by the greedy and treacherous gangster Hyman Roth, and a second between the forces of corruption within the Corleone family itself. The logic of Michael's power dictates that he do business with Roth and make tactical sacrifices of the interests of his subordinates, mainly his aging lieutenant Frankie Pentangeli, who is the voice of pure *Gemeinschaft*. Pentangeli's complaint is that Michael is putting the interests of "that Jew in Miami" over those of "your own blood" and that Roth and his allies are avaricious and untrustworthy, recruiting "spics" and "niggers" instead of good Sicilian boys to run the rackets in New York. Moreover, the Roth gang is obsessed with drug-peddling and prostitution instead of the gambling that was the backbone of the Sicilian gangs before and after Prohibition. The picture Pentangeli paints of the Roth gang and its activities and procedures is one of *Gesellschaft*—an organization devoted purely to material acquisition and sensory gratification through rational, calculative enterprise, an organization contemptuous of the traditional bonds of *Gemeinschaft* in the forms of the deference, manners, and ethnic and kinship loyalties that characterized the Corleone family in the past. Roth's gang is multiethnic, and his *consigliore* is a Sicilian, Johnny Ola.

But despite Pentangeli's complaint, it is actually Michael himself who is desperately trying to preserve the Corleone family, and it is his tragedy that the process of modernization by which *Gesellschaft* invades and corrupts the Corleones is irresistible. His sister Connie has virtually deserted her own family and seeks only money from Michael. His brother Fredo is seduced by Roth and Johnny Ola into betraying Michael and jeopardizing his life. His wife Kay aborts their unborn child in what is an act of war against the family itself. Troubled by the crumbling of his family, Michael asks his mother, the widowed Mama Corleone, "by being strong for his family, could Pop lose it?" To the old woman, still immersed in *Gemeinschaft*, the question is not even meaningful. "But you can never lose your family," she answers. "Times are changing," Michael replies.

Michael's tragedy is precisely that he is strong for his family and tries to arrest the rot, an effort that meets with only hatred and betrayal from family members who insist on putting their own gratification above that of the family. "He said there was something in it for me," whines Fredo when Michael demands to know why he collaborated with Johnny Ola. The contrast with the *Gesellschaft* of Hyman Roth is powerfully clear when Roth angrily explains why Michael's questions about Roth's attempted killing of Frank Pentangeli are out of line. Roth reminds Michael of Moe Greene, a man whom, "as much as anyone," Roth loved as a friend, and when "someone" (namely, Michael) ordered Greene killed, Roth says, "I never asked who gave the order—because this is the business we've chosen." To Roth, crime is merely business, a purely acquisitive and calculative activity, that ought to be immune to the sentiment and bonds of honor imported by Michael. To Michael, however, attacks on him, his family, and his dependents must be avenged, as was the case also with his father, who returned to Sicily some forty years after the murder of his own family to take vengeance on the Mafia Don who killed them.

At the end of Part II, yet another bloodbath ensues that is reminiscent of the massacre at the end of Part I and parallels the flashback of Vito Corleone's killing of Don Ciccio in Sicily. Michael insists on having Roth killed, along with Fredo and Pentangeli, who has fallen into the hands of the FBI as a witness. "Do you have to wipe out everybody?" Tom Hagen asks Michael. "No," Michael replies, "Only my enemies."

The bloodbath is perfectly logical, not only as a fulfillment of the vendetta that a *Gemeinschaft* recognizes and demands, but also as an act of power. Only Roth's death will confirm Michael's victory and remove a still dangerous enemy. Fredo is a living liability and is too stupid and weak to be trusted under any circumstances. Pentangeli knows too much and has been prevented from incriminating Michael only by pressure against his brother; he too is too dangerous to be allowed to live. In each case, Michael's insistence on their executions is, from the point of view of the Corleone power interests and from that of the moral code of the *Gemeinschaft*, logically essential and morally unobjectionable. The bloodbath and Michael's isolation at the end of Part II are confirmations not of the corruption and arrogance of power but of the inexorable logic of power—only by being strong for his family

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could Michael hope to preserve his family, but by being strong for it, he destroyed it. That was his tragedy, as it is the tragedy of human society. Power is not only necessary to the functioning of society, as Machiavelli taught; it also possesses a relentless logic that eventually eats up itself as it irresistibly converts *Gemeinschaft* into *Gesellschaft* and turns the consensual and deferential social bonds of the former into the coercive commands and cash relationships of modernity.

Indeed, the seeds of *Gesellschaft* and its corruption are already present in the book and Part I. For all of Vito Corleone's invocations of the sacred obligations of family and friendship, by the end of the novel virtually the whole family has been killed through treachery. Carlo Rizzi shamelessly cheats on and beats his wife, Connie Corleone, and sets up the murder of his brother-in-law Santino. Santino also cheats on his wife, and Fredo in the book sides with Moe Greene against Michael. Santino is manipulated into being set up for assassination precisely because he takes the family too seriously. He wants vengeance for the attack on his father and Carlo's beating of his sister, and he rushes blindly into the trap contrived for him. When Tessio is led off to execution for his own betrayal of the family, he tells Hagen to assure Michael his treason was nothing personal. "Tell Mike it was only business; I always liked him."

Ultimately, as Michael knows, it is always "only business"; the temptations of *Gesellschaft* and modernization, power, business, money, and survival are always stronger than the bonds of *Gemeinschaft*, honor, loyalty, and family. When Tessio's treachery is discovered, Hagen tells Michael he was surprised; he always thought it would have been Clemenza who betrayed him. No, says Michael, "Tessio was always smarter." It is not smart to put your faith in *Gemeinschaft* because it does not last. "All our people are businessmen," Michael tells Hagen in Part II. "Their loyalties are based on that."

Ultimately, then, the apparent distinction between the *Gemeinschaft* symbolized by the family and the *Gesellschaft* of modernity symbolized by normal or legitimate American society breaks down, and perhaps it is Michael who is naive after all, with the naiveté of the tragic hero who trusts in something that is foreign to the nature of man. For all the contrast between legitimate and criminal society, at last, when the final mask is torn off, there is no difference at all; the Corleone family is based on fraud as well as force, and it does indeed melt into and become indistinguishable from America.

The Godfather offers a powerfully pessimistic (some might even say cynical) view of man and society that slaps in the face the pleasanter views characteristic of modernist ideologies drawn from the doctrine of progress and especially the favorite American myth that through assimilation into the institutional environment offered by the democratic capitalism of the American *Gesellschaft*, human beings can be perfected and force and fraud as enduring and omnipresent elements of social existence can be escaped. When Michael is persuading Kay to marry him and to put aside her repulsion at the world in which he lives and where he prevails, he tells her, "Maybe I'm just one of those real old-fashioned conservatives they grow up in your hometown. I take care of myself, individual. Governments really don't do much for their people, that's what it comes down to, but that's not it really. All I can say, I have to help my father, I have to be on his side." For all Michael's own, early rebellion against his blood and his heritage, he cannot escape them, nor can he and his family escape the fate that the logic of power compels. Neither *Gemeinschaft* nor *Gesellschaft* offer any hope of a secular salvation, any safe resolution of man's fate, and the Machiavellian portrayal of religion in both book and films seems to hold out little hope of any other kind of salvation either.

But not quite. When Kay marries Michael, she notices that Mama Corleone, a very minor character in the book, goes to church everyday. The Protestant Kay asks her why she does so.

> "I go for my husband," she pointed down toward the floor, "so he don't go down there." She paused. "I say prayers for his soul every day so he go up there."

It is one of only two passages in either the book or the first two films that suggests the utility of religion for something other than a mask as well as one of the few passages that hints at the reality of the evil of Don Corleone, though it also suggests the secular necessity of men like him and Michael. Mama Corleone knows full well what her husband is, and she also knows she can do nothing to change him or the dependence of her world on him, and at his death in Part I, the old Don is playing with his grandson by putting an orange peel in his mouth and pretending to be a monster, a game that reveals at last another and equally true dimension of his character. Evil, as Machiavelli taught, is a necessary part of social and political organization, though it is to be recognized as such and not disguised through the illusory cant of modernist ideology.

Kay herself comes to perceive the evil of the reality her husband represents at the end of the book and of Part I of the films and also to recognize and accept it in the same way as the old Mrs. Corleone. Seeing Michael being saluted by his vassals as the new Don, what occurs to Kay is the metaphor of Rome, and thereby she herself confirms the truth of the parallel between normal and criminal society.

> Kay could see how Michael stood to receive their homage. He reminded her of statues in Rome, statues of those Roman emperors of antiquity, who, by divine right, held the power of life and death over their fellow men. One hand was on his hip, the profile of his face showed a cold proud power, his body was carelessly, arrogantly at ease, weight resting on one foot slightly behind the other.

And hence, the other, and final, scene of the book that suggests that religion has a meaning other than as a mask. The book concludes with Kay, having converted to Catholicism after she learns of her husband's role in the murder of Carlo Rizzi and of the true nature of his "business," in church at Mass, "saying the necessary prayers for the soul of Michael Corleone." If Michael is the new Don, Kay, representing the normal or legitimate society of America, has become the new Madonna Corleone, accepting the reality of what her husband represents and recognizing in her "necessary prayers" the dreadful duality of the evil that men do and the equally dreadful necessity for even such innocent children of the American *Gesellschaft* as Kay Adams to see it, to accept their dependence on it, to unite with it, and finally to pray for those who act out the tragedy it demands. ◁

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Redskin and Whitewash

by Chilton Williamson, Jr.

"In fourteen-hundred and ninety-two, Columbus sailed the ocean nude."
—Chronicles, 1992

Stolen Continents: The Americas Through Indian Eyes Since 1492
by Ronald Wright
Boston: Houghton Mifflin; 424 pp., $22.95

1492 And All That: Political Manipulations of History
by Robert Royal
Washington, D.C.: The Ethics and Public Policy Center; 200 pp., $18.95

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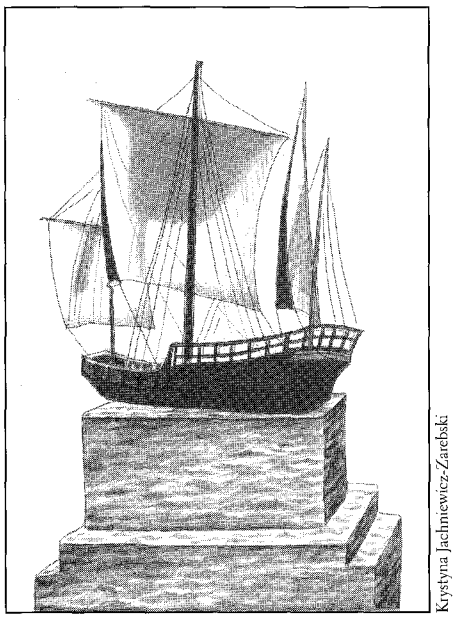
The profusion of the anti-Western virus released by the quincentenary of Columbus' landfall on the Caribbean island of San Salvador has become the mental equivalent of the AIDS epidemic, fatally infecting millions of promiscuous and incautious intellectuals and subintellectuals. For the literary ghetto, Kirkpatrick Sale is the sinister Mr. X to whose book *The Conquest of Paradise*, published in the fall of 1990, many subsequent cases of this formerly incurable disease can be traced. Today the reading public can be thankful that an effective antidote has at last been discovered and developed by Robert Royal, vice president and researcher at The Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington, D.C.

Ronald Wright's talents as an historian, observer, and writer make his affliction the more tragic: the extreme tendentiousness of *Stolen Continents* does not lessen the readability of his book, though it does vitiate it. Mr. Wright is the personification of the left's inability to think historically. His account of how five indigenous peoples—the Aztec, Maya, Inca, Cherokee, and Iroquois—suffered invasion by the white Europeans, offered them resistance, and finally induced a "rebirth" of their uprooted and smothered cultures is so outrageously one-sided and given to special pleading that the final effect is to undercut the reader's confidence in the author's trustworthiness. In 346 pages of text, literally no overt criticism of Native American culture, belief, or deeds is offered, while the entire rhetorical structure is designed to point up the evil of European civilization and the cruelty, mean spiritedness, and hypocrisy of its agents and representatives. Wright, a native of England now resident in Canada, tells how as a student he was bored by the histories of ancient Greece and Rome and of the Tudors and Stuarts, concluded that there must be something else, and found it in the history of the Inca. In Ronald Wright's case as in most others, boredom is a result of a lack of empathy. For Wright, it is not enough that modern Mexico is what Royal calls "a melding of cultures," native, mestizo, and European: anything short of the preservation of Aztec society in its pre-Columbian form, intact and unadulterated, represents an historical crime—the result of dragging the Aztec, kicking and screaming, into History, another evil European invention. Andrew Lytle in his novel *At the Moon's Inn*, by treating De Soto's invasion of Florida as a prefiguration of the rape of the Old South by Union generals, in a sense anticipated the inversion of cultural values that is being practiced fifty years later with infinitely less nuance and wisdom. Would Ronald Wright, who belongs to the species of leftist that champions "tradition" while scorning "progress," be willing to defend the "traditionalist" values of the Confederacy against the onslaught by the "progressive" Unionists? Somehow I doubt that the multiculturalist fervor extends so far as that.


Krystyna Jachniewicz-Zarebski

Stolen Continents, like all of the recent anti-Columbian literature, is fundamentally dishonest work; an intellectual set-up disingenuously assuming a historical consensus that the Indians were never more than Stone Age savages incapable of anything properly describable as civilization. This sleight-of-hand makes it possible for the revisionist historian to strike a blow for enlightenment by gushing over Long Houses built of logs and bark and "town houses" supported by poles inset in rock, as though the germane comparison were with mud huts and igloos rather than with St. Paul's Cathedral. In fact, Europeans in the colonial Americas were frequently impressed by what they saw of Indian culture and said so, as Wright's own documentation shows. Other examples of fast-and-loose techniques are Wright's equation of the rough adventurers who were the cutting edge of European exploration and colonization with European society as a whole (the da Vincis, Saint Theresas, and Pascals of *any* civilization are not generally found in such vigorous vanguards) and his adverse comparison of these with the generality of the Indian civilizations they conquered; his ten-

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dency to judge the Indians according to their ideals and beliefs, while condemning the Europeans for their individual actions (European ideals are understood to be simple hypocrisy); a nearly infinite capacity for appreciating the most bizarre absurdities of Indian religion while taking snide pokes at the Europeans' "absolutist" theology of "the three gods" and the "creed that regards the quintessential creature of the earth as evil" (Wright can't have been paying any more attention in Bible class than he was to lectures on Tudor and Stuart history); and an implicit insistence that the actions of nations and individuals can and ought to be judged by identical moral strictures. (Reinhold Niebuhr explained more than a generation ago why this is not the case, but the left as usual wasn't listening.) Finally, there is simply too much evidence of native barbarism, savagery, cruelty, and ignorance eliminated from the narrative, too much soft-pedaling of what few examples of red mischief are unavoidably included.

The undeclared enemy of the anti-Columbian syllabus is Christianity even more than it is capitalism, imperialism, ethnocentricity, and genocide, which the revisionists assume to be derivative from the Gospels in any case. (A "serious" work of history forthcoming from a major New York publisher this fall answers the question "What kind of people could have behaved as the Europeans did in the Americas?" with the single word "Christians.") In *1492 And All That* Robert Royal, a Roman Catholic apologist for time and Western man, provides the best imaginable rebuttal to the *Zeitgeist*. In a book of 200 pages (Kirkpatrick Sale's screed runs to 453), he has simply demolished a burgeoning body of fake scholarship—including especially that of Kirkpatrick Sale.

Mr. Royal strikes with vigor and lands blows on every front. He begins with Christopher Columbus himself and shows how unrealistic in both a historical and a personal sense the revisionist's critique of *El Almirante* is, arguing that the new Columbus "is merely the product of various opposite evil traditions that define Europe and Europeans—of which we are all the heirs, save, of course, the Kirkpatrick Sales who transcend cultural determinism."

In subsequent chapters, Royal demonstrates how contact with the primitive peoples of their expanding empire encouraged the Spaniards to debate "in remarkably open fashion" the moral issues raised by conquest overseas. In 1500 Queen Isabella outlawed the practice of selling Native Americans from the docks of Spanish ports, and in 1550 Charles V ordered a theological commission to be convened in Valladolid for the purpose of establishing a more scrupulous moral basis for the governance of the Indians. The Dominican Order developed itself as a kind of unofficial Catholic Society for the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and the Dominican friar and theologian Francisco de Vitoria formulated a system of principles recognizing and protecting the rights of the aborigines as rational beings and children of God; his two collections of lectures on the subject, *De Indis* and *De Iuri Belli*, earn him a place with Suarez and Grotius as one of the fathers of modern international law. In his dissection of the contemporary fetish of "multiculturalism," Royal observes that the Europeans were for the most part much more receptive to the new and the exotic than the Indians themselves were, and that they were in a far better position to "understand" these primitives than to be understood by them. ("Most Indian groups regarded only themselves as full human beings and members of other tribes as inferior in customs or understanding.") The notion of pluralism, he reminds us, is itself a distinctively European idea: "The wish to contest an allegedly monolithic European view of history with fresh voices and perspectives inescapably belongs to a very European mode of thought." ("The cultural pluralism that we value so highly did not exist within any tribe.") While acknowledging that the idea that Columbus "discovered" America is anathema to anti-Columbian activists, Royal suggests "it would be unfair to ignore the fact that [Columbus] did something more far-reaching. He may not have proved the world was round for Europeans, but he did so for Native Americans. And in so doing, he inaugurated the age in which, finally, all the world's people inhabited one world *and knew they inhabited it*, though that realization was slow to be accepted in many newly discovered lands." Almost in passing, Royal takes out the positions of assorted stragglers in the train of the anti-Columbian troops by a series of bazooka attacks disproving the notion that the Indians were feminists, egalitarians, communitarians, and environmentalists. (After graphically describing the Aztec equivalent of open-heart surgery he remarks, "This too is harmony with nature, but a harmony that depends, as all such philosophical concepts do, on your beliefs about nature and the gods.") Finally Royal, having criticized the double standard on which the whole anti-Columbiad is based, identifies the crusade "in its most profound moments" as "a Western objection to the disappearance or attenuation of human riches within the West itself," and concludes: "Like it or not, Western culture with its own particularities and its openness to light from the outside is the cultural matrix upon which the world has become, if not unified, then set on a path of something like universal mutual intercourse. No other culture in the world has—or probably could have—undertaken that task."

1492 And All That is a masterful book, brilliantly argued and eloquently written; one of the very few titles to which the clichéd publisher's claims of "Absolutely required reading," or "A truly indispensable work" could fairly be applied. The real question to emerge from the Columbus controversy is, of course, "Could history have been otherwise?" Robert Royal is a wise—perhaps even a brave—enough man to assure us: it couldn't. Perhaps, even, shouldn't. "The glory of Rome and the splendor of India, as their own high cultures recognized, were rooted—as are all large-scale human endeavors—in human loss, contradictions, and moral doubt, for which Vergil invented the immortal phrase *lacrimae rerum*. . . . Tragedy is probably sharpest when the situation dictates that a choice be made between incompatible goods leading to the unavoidable loss of something humanly valuable. Even in epic achievements human costs inevitably must be paid. Epic and tragedy do not conceal truth beneath artificiality but open windows onto a fuller reality."

The native societies of the Western Hemisphere were finally overcome by History, which the left has always refused to recognize or tolerate in its quest for a secular and ahistorical paradise on earth. They were neither its first victims nor will they be its last, as in the end we all may be. If Fate exists, surely it is because History indeed does have a plan. ©

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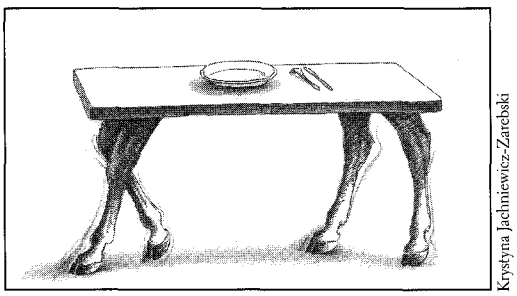
Das Kowpital

by Stephen Bodio

"Has anyone ever seen a clean cow?"
—Anonymous



Krystyna Jachniewicz-Zarebski

Beyond Beef: The Rise and Fall of the Cattle Culture
by Jeremy Rifkin
New York: E.P. Dutton, Inc.;
353 pp., $21.00

The Covenant of the Wild
by Stephen Budiansky
New York: William Morrow;
192 pp., $18.00

◆

It's hard to know where to begin to respond to Jeremy Rifkin's apocalyptic new book, *Beyond Beef*. You could start with Chesterton's famous remark on "believing *anything*," or some of the paleoconservative ruminations on "Gnosticism." Perhaps in a time when Oliver Stone's paranoid (and lucrative) fantasies pass as history and when even critics who know that there is no truth in these genuflect before *JFK*'s "power," we should not be surprised when such establishment organs as *Time* magazine take Rifkin's "ideas" seriously. My peculiar circumstances as a naturalist with a background in biology who actually lives in cattle country have perhaps distorted my responses, since I find *Beyond Beef* to be very nearly hilarious in its mixture of hysteria and warped emphasis.

"Ancient beef-eating myths and dietary practices," Rifkin argues, "have been used throughout history to maintain male dominance and establish gender and class hierarchies. In the modern age, beef-eating has been used as a tool to forge national identity, advance colonial policies, and even promote racial theory. . . . We will . . . assess the moral and ethical implications that flow from the deconstruction of modern meat." Cattle, he believes, are "the root of all evil." "[T]he new Christian cultists transformed the Mithraic bull god into the new symbol of darkness. The god of its adversary became the devil incarnate." Rifkin continues with a lengthy description from the Council of Toledo that ascribes to the devil "a sulfurous smell," but ignores the fact that the devil was more likely to be portrayed as a goat (which, were he a country boy, he would know smells worse than any bull and will devastate the land more completely).

But of course we're not talking logic here but deconstruction, by which anything can mean anything. It soon becomes clear in Rifkin's book that cows themselves are not the villain (elsewhere, he calls for "partnership with the bovine and, by extension, the other sentient creatures") but human beings, particularly those "Eurasian herdsmen who became the first real protocapitalists." Lest you miss the point, he underlines it: "The emergence of the great Western cattle cultures and the emergence of world capitalism are inseparable." Here we have the book's thesis in a nutshell: the eating of cattle is responsible for every imagined horror denounced by the politically correct. "In India"—an accredited Good Country—"the cattle complex helped create a static social order." (With such nonclassist structures as Untouchables and nonsexist ones as suttee, but let that pass.) "In Spain and Britain"—Evil Countries—"the cattle complex helped ignite the fires of colonial expansion, propelling Europe into the New World."

(Incidentally, Rifkin's approval of Indian cow culture reveals his poorly concealed animal rights agenda: "At present there are nearly 200 million cows in India . . . Although cattle are the mainstay for much of the economic life of the peasantry, they do not compete with the human population for the arable land . . . the cattle complex that emerged in India managed to strengthen both the sacred and profane aspects of human beings' relationship to the bovine. . . . In central and western Europe, the Aryan descendants of the steppe people *were forced* to tread a very different path in their relationship to the bovine, a far more secular course *that would lead to world colonization*." [Italics mine.] This argument is especially ingenuous, as he later states that the presence of far fewer cattle on far less abraded range will likely lead to further desertification *and* to global warming.)

We proceed, of course, to Columbus: "In search of spices to enhance the taste of beef, Columbus found new pastureland for grazing cattle." No poor person ever enjoyed beef unless he was led to it. "Wealthy landed aristocrats colonized the new lands with cattle," who were tended by cowboys: "[these] seasonal workers so glorified in literature were the henchmen and handymen of the rich—their cattle warriors on the plains of the New World," helping to "secure the fortunes of both the Spanish crown and the new landed gentry in the Americas." Rifkin seems blind even to his own recorded facts; on one page he quotes a Swede who visited England in 1798 and was amazed to find that all

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Englishmen eat meat at every dinner, oblivious to his immediately previous assertion that "the poor were virtually excluded from a beef-centered diet until well into the last quarter of the nineteenth century, having to settle instead for . . . cheese, milk, butter, and other dairy products."

Rifkin considers the keeping of pedigreed animals to be racist, and unfairly accuses Charles Darwin of racism. He links the destruction of the Plains Indians to sinister British financial (meaning beef) interests. He creates nonexistent communities of farmers (on the rare occasions that the settlers tried to grow crops in the arid west, they made far graver ecological blunders than cattlemen did) so that they may be extirpated by the Evil Cattle Interests. He virtually ignores the buffalo, whose impact upon the prairie soil was enormous and is still not well understood, except to lament the destruction of "the Indian's commissary." He accepts uncritically the neoromantic view of the Plains tribes, ignoring buffalo jumps and paleolithic extinctions. Finally, he predicts the imminent ecological collapse of the American West, and indicts the cattle culture in—what else?—global warming.

Rifkin makes, inevitably, a few good points. We might well eat leaner beef; some of the feed additives routinely fed to cattle on feedlots are horrifying. But it is hard to discern these isolated facts in Rifkin's jumble of opinions, "factoids," and sheer lunacy. I have neither the time nor the inclination to refute every one of Rifkin's assertions. But since one chapter—"Hoofed Locusts"—deals with conservation and biology on the Western range, subjects which I know something about, I will examine it in detail in order to demonstrate his habitual method of argument.

Rifkin begins with a debatable first statement: "Desertification is caused by the overgrazing of livestock; overcultivation of the land; deforestation; and improper irrigation techniques." There is, to begin with, no such consensus regarding desertification. Climate changes, some of them dating to prehistoric times, certainly play a role. An archaeologist recently told me that aerial photos reveal ancient dunes, stabilized by desert plant cover, in the lower Rio Grande Valley that are five thousand years old; the lower Rio was even more a desert before the beginning of the agrarian era than it is today. Next, "livestock" includes goats, which climb and eat trees, and sheep, not just cattle. Finally, while deforestation is a real problem in the Sahel and holy India, not even the worst critics of grazing (or logging) consider deforestation *per se* to be a problem in the United States. We have more trees now than at any time since Columbus. Yet Rifkin blithely proceeds (through paragraphs blaming desertification for urbanization) to advance to his primary thesis, which is that cattle have ruined the West. He states that, "Parts of the Great Plains and the Western range are fast becoming a barren desert." He might be interested to know that every biologist I have talked to (including some that are antigrazing!) in the course of researching a book on these issues thinks that the range has been *improving* for forty years; some would say for longer than that. He complains about rivers degraded by trampling cattle to the point where they only support chub and squawfish. Does he know that in many cases these species are the natives among whom the *trout* have been artificially introduced? He quotes a notorious anti-cow polemicist and nonscientist on the decline of prairie chickens. Is he aware that recent evidence suggests that the chickens followed the buffalo, needing "edges" and grazed areas within their habitat? He quotes statistics of animal-rightists on the "shriveling" numbers of pronghorn, elk, and bighorn, which he compares with the "guesstimated" pre-Columbian populations; yet all three species are proliferating, elk almost visibly so. He whines about the fate of feral burros and horses, about "the misguided belief that these small numbers of animals pose a competitive threat to the millions of cattle"; does he know how much more destructive horses are than cattle of the native vegetation, or that burros compete not with cattle but with threatened desert bighorn sheep?

His worries about predator control are, sadly, more accurate. But the only species missing from the southern Plains ecosystem are the wolf and the grizzly bear, and steps are now being taken to restore both. The north kept its grizzly, and there the wolf is coming back on his own. Despite the much-quoted antipredator sentiments of stockmen, most ranchers I know—especially those under the age of fifty—would accept the wolves' return if they were guaranteed some control over stock-killing individuals. Ironically, books like Rifkin's only confirm cattlemen's feeling of being endangered themselves.

Only a culture far removed from the soil, from animals, farming, hunting, birth, and death could produce such warped ideas, or those of the animal rights movement with which they are in sympathy. In a sane world, Budiansky's *The Covenant of the Wild* would permanently sink People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals and their ilk. Budiansky, a reporter for *U.S. News and World Report* and a part-time farmer, has no patience with animal rightists, but his purpose in writing is not to argue with them. He wants to show us how domestication was an evolutionary "strategy" by which certain animals, including cows and dogs, used their association with humans to survive the Ice Age. I do not want to slight his subtle and often witty argument; obviously, the "choice" the creatures made was not a conscious one (though it may not have been initially all that conscious on our ancestors' side, either). One of Budiansky's most fascinating theses is that, by simply selecting for "tame" behavior, early man encouraged neoteny or retention of juvenile traits into adulthood, which complex of characters immediately gave rise to the diversity that provides the basis for further selection. This particular theory has been tried on Russian fur farms with foxes: simply by selecting from among the tamest individuals, the breeders produced animals with spots, lop ears, and doglike behavior in only twenty years.

As I say, this is a subtle book, and a sane one; it will not likely receive full-page reviews in *Time*, nor will farmers and ranchers be likely to quote it in their newsletters. I fear that our society needs more literacy and more connection to the land, while every year it has less of each. Rifkin actually applauds the squeamishness that makes consumers prefer their meat processed and prewrapped as a step on the road to a higher consciousness that finally eschews meat-eating, although in fact it is merely another step toward abstraction, what Rifkin ironically calls "cold evil." A healthy society would laugh at Rifkin, accept his few good ideas, and give him a pat on the head—just as English society used to treat *its* cranks. ◇

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A Wilson for Our Times

by Paul Gottfried

Woodrow Wilson
by August Heckscher
New York: Charles Scribner's Sons;
743 pp., $35.00

◆

John Lukacs has observed that our century's two most significant revolutionaries were Lenin and Wilson. Of the two, according to Lukacs, the internationalist Lenin had less destructive influence in the long run than the democratic moralist but fervent nationalist Wilson; today it may be said that the Wilsonians have outlasted the Commies. Democracy and national self-determination are words that have come to be used interchangeably by the press, except to denote those pockets of reactionary nationalists who have still not been brought to accept global-democratic orthodoxies. August Heckscher's voluminous biography is intended to recall Wilson's life and its meaning at a time when the rebirth of nations and of international law may be creating a climate particularly receptive to "the ideas of the man who first coined the term 'New World Order.'"

A former president of the Woodrow Wilson Foundation and present member of the advisory committee that thus far has edited 68 volumes of Wilson's papers, Heckscher has a formidable knowledge of his subject. Rarely have I encountered a biography so exhaustively documented. Heckscher also exhibits a dedication to his subject that only few political biographers of this generation—Dumas Malone writing on Jefferson, Margaret Coit on Calhoun, George Nash on Hoover, and Stephen Ambrose on Nixon being other examples—have brought to their work. The problem here is that Heckscher has produced a monument instead of a probing biography. He has merely touched up, however lovingly, the portrait of that principled but forbidding statesman who emerges from Arthur S. Link's multivolume study of Wilson. In the revised portrait, Wilson is made to appear sexually passionate with his two wives (and perhaps with other women), as well as "sensitive" to human concerns, particularly the quest for peace. Unlike Link, Heckscher diligently covers up Wilson's foolish and deceitful conduct. Link, for example, depicts Wilson as clumsy in his Mexican adventures and as far less than an honest broker in trying to make peace between the two sides in the First World War. Heckscher, by contrast, moves gingerly whenever faced with his hero's obvious dishonesty and ineptitude. When he does criticize Wilson, he faults him for being overly idealistic rather than mean-spirited, as he definitely was in telling his food commissioners after the war to feed only those who had fought on "the democratic side."

This copiously documented hagiography ignores the fact that Wilson, like Bismarck, Cromwell, and Napoleon, does not lend himself well to saccharine portraits. Though less drawn to him than to those other men, I find that, like them also, Wilson was unquestionably a significant and personally interesting figure without being a morally noble one. He was not a principled aristocrat but a man driven by a vision for reconstructing human life; and, whether thrusting his country into war, suppressing its constitutional liberties, or imposing an administrative state upon his fellow citizens, he was working to give flesh to that vision. To those who may be offended by his righteous appeals to Providence, it may be answered that Wilson himself was acting providentially in some Hegelian sense. If world history is, as Hegel imagined, an unfolding divine judgment, then Wilson was the world historical figure who shaped the American century, for better or worse. He tore the theory and practice of American democracy away from self-governing communities and associated them irreversibly with an expanding civil service at home and an imperialistic mission abroad.

Since Wilson was neither a spellbinding orator nor a military leader, his accomplishments seem all the more remarkable. They were also necessary to turn a people once jealous of its liberties into the subjects of a national welfare state with global commitments. Despite Heckscher's heroic efforts to portray a passionate and marvelously eloquent Wilson, I read his descriptions without being persuaded. The quotations he offers only serve to confirm a mordant remark by John Lukacs, that the great crusader for democracy spoke and wrote "warmed-over oatmeal."

Given his formative influence upon the present American republic, the packaging of Wilson as a principled architect of the New World Order is likely to continue, subject to periodic variations. Thus, as twenty years ago Wilson was still made to combine idealism with Victorian demeanor, he has now been adopted by a new generation for whom he was erotic and sensitive as well as globally idealistic; eventually, perhaps, he will be found to have been an advocate of black civil rights and a Philosemite. Such biographical manipulations are necessary to sanctify those who contributed so heavily to making the nation what it has now become.

Clyde Wilson has expounded on this subject of historiographical refurbishment, and shown how such refurbishment increased dramatically after the Civil War. Professor Wilson highlights the marginalization of specifically Southern contributions to the national experience in textbooks published since Reconstruction and particularly since the 1950's; Heckscher illustrates Wilson's thesis by downplaying his subject's Southern upbringing. Woodrow's father, Joseph Wilson, a founder with that unmistakably Confederate theologian James Thornwell of the Southern Presbyterian Church, is persistently described as a Midwesterner. True, Joseph had held a pulpit in Chillicothe, Ohio, before going on to Virginia and Georgia. But his sojourn in the Midwest did not prevent him, as Heckscher concedes, from being an exuberant supporter of the Confederacy. Woodrow and his first wife Ellen were both raised in Georgia and returned there often to visit family. Attempts to present Wilson as a secularized Puritan ignore the biographical inconvenience that he was a displaced Southerner from a profoundly conservative church. He drew his democratic

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universalist ideas from the 19th-century Englishmen James Mill and John Bright, as Link shows, not from any Protestant creed.

In line with his overall cosmetic project, Heckscher has Wilson battling anti-Semitism to get Louis Brandeis confirmed as a Supreme Court justice in 1916. We are shown a Wilson "entirely without religious prejudice," who was appalled by such atavistic hate. Though Wilson may have been religiously tolerant if not indifferent, he certainly despised Jews socially, a fact that other biographers have acknowledged. And the fight over Brandeis had far less to do with his Jewish antecedents than with the justified fear that this labor union advocate would not be a dispassionate judge in labor cases. Moreover, Heckscher cannot get on the subject of war without thrusting his own utopian conceits into Wilson's mouth. He does so most ludicrously when he depicts the nine-year-old Woodrow standing in the ruins of the fallen Confederacy pining for "an integrated world order." Why is it so hard to find a biography explaining what made Woodrow Wilson tick? Perhaps it will take nothing less than a counterrevolution to change the situation.

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The Democratic Trajectory

by William R. Hawkins

The Military Revolution and Political Change: Origins of Democracy and Autocracy in Early Modern Europe
by Brian M. Downing
Princeton: Princeton University Press; 308 pp., $50.00

◆

It is common in liberal and neoconservative circles to argue that the United States should foster democracy around the world to enhance its own security because "democracies don't fight each other." At the same time, more traditional conservative critics call for a return to classical republicanism, which they believe will produce, among other things, peace as America retreats from "empire." Implicit in both arguments is the notion that nations have no objective foreign policy or security interests with which its statesmen, regardless of the constitutional form of their governments, must contend. The ghost of Thomas Paine is evident behind this idea. Paine believed that "war is the system of Government on the old construction. . . . Man is not the enemy of Man." The "old construction" to which he refers is the military-bureaucratic absolutism that was overthrown in France in 1789 and of which Brian M. Downing now writes.

The Military Revolution and Political Change is a refreshing return to a realistic view of political history. Not that Downing doesn't have a constitutional preference: he is clearly a partisan of "liberal democracy," and the theme of his book is how certain states (England, Sweden, Holland) managed to maintain a "democratic trajectory" during the constant wars of the early modern era (the 16th to the 18th centuries). His realism derives from his acceptance of conflict as an inescapable aspect of international relations, as a force that molds governments whose first responsibility is to meet the security needs of their nations. Though he considers those states fortunate that managed to survive and prosper without resorting to autocracy, he does not condemn those that deviated from the liberal path under pressure:

> The Hohenzollerns and Bourbons faced an increasingly dangerous international environment. . . . No latter-day Cincinnatus could help here by assuming temporary power, defeating the foreign danger, then retiring to his farm. War became a more or less permanent state of affairs, and remained so for centuries . . . a permanent, extractive state had to be built, and given the circumstances, this necessarily involved the destruction of the estates and the rest of constitutional government. The choice was less between good and evil than between continued independence and loss of sovereignty.

Downing notes that the absolutist or royalist outlook extended beyond crown and court:

> Within the nobility, gentry and burghers were numerous adherents of the "national security" position, whose support came from a sober assessment of international realities; survival was indeed imperiled without military and constitutional change.

Downing offers six case studies to make his point: Prussia, France, Poland, England, Sweden, and the Dutch Republic. He sees medieval constitutionalism as the source of later democratic momentum, the main liberal features of the medieval period being decentralized government, property rights, and the rule of law. If these institutions survived the stress of war, then society had a chance to travel the bumpy road to modern democracy.

Downing does not equate democracy with the bourgeoisie. He finds the commercial classes to have been quite adaptable, capable of prospering under constitutionalism *and* absolutism since both systems valued and promoted economic growth through mercantilist policies. Instead he cites the influence of the "little appreciated virtues" of the medieval past in the development of democratic institutions in early modern Europe.

National economic success played a major role in determining whether a state would have to resort to extraconstitutional measures (mainly new or unauthorized taxes) to meet its security needs. The Military Revolution produced large professional armies reliant upon artillery and extensive supply networks. Wars became protracted and much more expensive. The self-supporting knightly warrior-class had lost on the battlefield (the only debating forum that counted) even before the appearance of firearms, the victims of well-drilled infantry with pikes and longbows that were often city militias. But the Military Revolution quickly outgrew the capacity of city-states to wage war successfully.

"[W]here war needs could be met without mobilizing drastic proportions of national resources . . . conflict with the constitution was much lighter," Downing argues. The wealth of England and Holland could support great power within a liberal framework. However, after the mercantilist policies of

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England and France ruined the Dutch commercial empire, the republic lacked the domestic resources to be other than a pawn in the games of others. England was also able to use its financial strength to borrow instead of tax, and to hire mercenaries and subsidize allied armies rather than conscript large numbers of its own citizens. Sweden during its period of enormous strength was able to make up for a weak domestic economy by fighting on the continent, supporting its armies by plunder. Prussia tried this too, but had to squeeze its small domestic base, thus becoming Downing's model of a successful absolutism.

France had a large internal market, but to mobilize it meant uprooting provincial and noble privileges. The Bourbons fell short of the Hohenzollerns. The French Revolution was triggered not only by a fiscal crisis but by the survival of an independent aristocracy that saw that crisis as a chance to strike and by the continued capacity of the peasants to rebel when the ruling classes were in disarray. Downing argues that it was the "fissures and weaknesses in French military-bureaucratic absolutism" that were its undoing. The revolution returned France to a "democratic trajectory," but at high cost. "The promise of democracy was followed by chaos, terror and Napoleon," writes Downing. The sudden mobilization of the masses was destabilizing and created social antagonisms that plague France to this day. Downing believes a "direct institutional continuity of medieval constitutional government" was the better path to democracy.

Yet constitutionalism survived only where it was able to adapt to the needs of the Military Revolution, the Estates accepting the responsibilities of the Crown. Downing's constitutional states fought just as many wars as did the absolutists. Applying this insight to the present century, two world wars belie the notion that democracies won't fight. Only governments with popular support have been able to mobilize the resources to wage modern war on a large scale. A world of democratic nations would be capable of unleashing the most devastating wars in history arising from persistent sources of conflict.

Of course liberal political orders can also fail. In 18th-century Poland the gentry were "little more than sacks of potatoes, whose main concern outside their manors became the protection of their liberties and incomes from the crown." The gentry used constitutionalism to paralyze the central government, with the result that Poland vanished from the map. "The Polish gentry exchanged the privilege of national sovereignty for the right to make money," Downing concludes, making them "perhaps the most irresponsible elite in all European history."

In Downing's ideal modern democratic nation-state, there is a balance of rights and duties. He notes that, "Military service and citizenship were intertwined in antiquity" and that the medieval knight exchanged military services for his liberties and privileges. This exchange was extended to all classes by the Military Revolution: mass armies led to an expanded franchise. Patriotism motivated sacrifice but also sparked social reform on the ground that "a land fit for heroes" should await the returning troops. Minorities gained respect from their valor in combat.

Yet hiring preferences for veterans, V. A. hospitals, and the G. I. Bill are benefits that differ fundamentally from those of the present welfare state, where the shrill demand for rights is accompanied by an equally loud rejection of duties. The same imbalance is evident in granting the vote to "citizens" who have performed no public service, not even the payment of taxes. Democratism has spawned new threats to constitutionalism more dangerous than any king.

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LIBERAL ARTS

PAY NOT TO PLAY

A proposal to "vaccinate all young women against pregnancy" with Norplant, to distribute free contraceptive devices "in every public lavatory," and to establish school-based "Planned Parenthood clinics" was submitted to the commissioners of Cook County, Illinois, last May, according to Kathleen Sullivan of Project Respect. Commissioner Maria Pappas (D-Chicago), author of the proposal, also recommends "federal and state supported incentive programs" against pregnancy and a "rebate or voucher for not getting pregnant."

Gradgrind in Love

by David Gordon

Sex and Reason
by Richard A. Posner
Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press;
458 pp., $29.95

◆

Richard Posner has a complaint against many of his fellow judges. Owing to their lack of up-to-date information and their conservative backgrounds, his colleagues often decide cases that touch on sex in an ignorant and benighted manner. Judge Posner aims to remedy matters with this comprehensive treatise, which offers both a theory of how sexual customs have evolved and normative guidance on abortion, censorship of pornography, homosexual marriage, and similar issues.

Before his elevation to the Court of Appeals, Posner achieved renown as a leading proponent of the law-and-economics movement; and the present work rests on an extension of this approach to sexual matters. Cost and benefit, the basic categories of economics, govern marriage and the family no less than the business world.

More concretely, Posner holds that three factors principally determine the nature of marriage in a society: the scarcity of available women; the degree of urbanization; and, most importantly, the work accessible to women outside the home. In ancient Greece, female infanticide among other reasons led to a dearth of marriageable women; as a result, women married at a much younger age than men. The sole aim of the marriage was reproduction. Women had nothing to 'sell' but their reproductive power and were left sequestered in the home. No close emotional bonds formed between husband and wife, and men found solace in sexual affairs outside the marriage with both women and other men.

The rise of Christianity drastically altered the customary style of marriage. Though reproduction of course remained vital, marriage increasingly came to involve close emotional union. Posner oddly calls this "companionate" marriage, although the term normally designates a form of childless trial marriage that Judge Benjamin Lindsey pro-

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moted with great notoriety some sixty years ago. Bertrand Russell's *Marriage and Morals*, which Posner frequently cites, devotes a chapter to it, but Posner has apparently not taken notice.

The type of marriage that has prevailed in the Western world for nearly two thousand years is, according to Posner, due for replacement. Contemporary women have entered the job market in large numbers and their financial dependency on men has lessened. To Posner, this development portends the decline of lifelong marriage. Cohabitation for limited periods will replace traditional marriage, a trend that will proceed all the faster as developments in technology detach sex from biological reproduction. Posner looks to the liberal sexual morality of Sweden as the wave of the future, at least for the West. (He devotes only a few pages to non-Western societies.)

Posner's speculations are beset by a number of problems. Of each of his stages, he asks: what economic functions does marriage play in society? But to describe a function does not suffice for a causal explanation, as Ernest Nagel long ago showed in a classic paper. Posner needs to demonstrate how the actions of individuals lead to the spread of the customs he describes. He devotes all of one paragraph to this key difficulty; the implausible "Darwinian" mechanism he refers to requires primitive tribesmen to possess a sophisticated knowledge of economics and anatomy.

Posner thinks that a great advantage of his theory over "moralistic" explanations of sex is that it generates testable hypotheses, *e.g.*, "black men commit fewer heterosexual rapes than white men, after allowance is made for other variables that explain differences in crime rates. . . ." While this particular statement "is not supported" by the data, the ever-ingenious Posner finds comfort in the fact that although "the coefficient of the nonwhite variable is positive for rape . . . [it is] much smaller in the case of rape than is the case of any other crime against the person." In other words, though the hypothesis is wrong, it might have been even more erroneous. Thus the theory is vindicated.

Although one can only be impressed by Posner's vast erudition, albeit gathered with the help of 11 research assistants, he makes a number of questionable claims. For instance, he states that, "Textual silences can be pregnant. From the fact that the Ten Commandments do not forbid incest we should not infer that the ancient Jews condoned the practice. . . ." He evidently has forgotten that the Old Testament contains detailed regulations forbidding incest. And why does he think that the "disapproval of male adultery" began with Christianity? Although by definition in the Old Testament adultery can occur only with a married woman, both persons involved are subject to the death penalty. As a source for the Roman Catholic position on transsexual operations, he cites a pamphlet by an Anglican theologian. Some Catholic theologians, Posner quite correctly thinks, are not completely hostile to contraception. But one of his two examples is Germain Grisez, a leading opponent of contraception who has written a book attacking it, and it is false that David Popenoe, the foremost sociologist of the Swedish family, found no ill results from Sweden's family structure except a rise in juvenile delinquency.

If the book consisted only of Posner's descriptive theory of sex, it might be rated informative, though overly speculative and careless. Unfortunately, a substantial part of the work consists of Posner's venture into moral theory, and here his skill at argument deserts him.

He discovers an internal tension in the position of most critics of abortion. "Suppose the mother has a 10 percent chance of dying unless she has an abortion. A majority of supporters of the right-to-life movement would think abortion permissible in these circumstances. The implication is that a mother is worth ten fetuses"—a contradiction of their professed belief that the life of the fetus equals in value that of the mother. Further, since a mother is worth no more than a child, the latter "is also worth ten fetuses. And this, I claim, is what right-to-lifers are committed to believing if they want their beliefs to be consistent." Not at all: a view regarding the permissibility of abortion need not be based in any way on a comparison of the value of different lives. Posner seems incapable of grasping a moral theory that, unlike his own utilitarianism, judges acts by other criteria than maximizing value.

In his discussion of pornography, Posner once more puts logic to work: "The feminists fear that pornography causes rape; [Irving] Kristol that it causes the substitution of masturbation for intercourse. Since rape is a form of intercourse, Kristol must believe that pornography reduces the incidence of rape; while feminists must believe that it reduces the incidence of masturbation." An analogous "argument" will make the fallacy clear. Television and books are partial substitutes for each other. Therefore, an increase in the sale of calculus textbooks will decrease the number of viewers of *Sesame Street*.

Rape gives Posner more than a little trouble. It is not intrinsically wrong: the view that certain acts are immoral independent of consequences rests on religious beliefs that Posner thinks outmoded. Although most "Western intellectuals" have given up belief in God, many continue to think that human beings are "not just animals endowed with large brains but beings of a special worth and dignity, endowed with a moral sense and entitled to respectful treatment by our fellow men." This is idle superstition: it generates no testable propositions. Away with such nonsense!

Why then is rape wrong? What if a rapist derives more satisfaction from his assault than his victim suffers injury? Would a utilitarian then favor it? Posner's moral slide rule gives us the answer: "licensing utility monsters such as Bluebeard or de Sade to rape would not really be utility-maximizing, if only because of the fear it would generate in the community as a whole and the expense of the self-protective measures that this fear would incite." Were Posner not an influential federal judge whose views help form the law, this imitation of Mr. Gradgrind would be laughable.

What is the upshot of Posner's long inquiry? He vigorously opposes efforts to promote the traditional family. Resistance to the Swedish utopia that lies ahead comes from "social conservatives, who dislike change." These troglodytes lack the trust in the free market of the followers of John Stuart Mill. That many of these "social conservatives" support the free market to a far greater extent than Mill seems not to have occurred to him.

Posner himself hardly qualifies as a champion of the free market. He favors governmental subsidies of sexual education and contraceptive advice, even though his own analysis of the consequences of abortion, homosexuals in the military, etc., lends only "equivocal sup-

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port" to the liberal policies he endorses, as he himself recognizes. His discussion offers us no means to weigh the good and bad consequences of the various measures he proposes. Thus, all he is really entitled to say on utilitarian grounds is that he does not know whether his program of sexual reform will be beneficial. But this does not stop him: Sweden, with its "morally indifferent" attitude toward sex, beckons.

Sex and Reason leaves me astonished. The combination of assiduous reading with preposterous errors, poor reasoning, and moral blindness is in my experience unique. Yvor Winters' description of Ezra Pound applies with much more justice to Posner; he is a barbarian loose in a museum.

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Bambino and Minotaur

by Jeffrey Meyers

Intellectual Memoirs: New York 1936-1938
by Mary McCarthy
Foreword by Elizabeth Hardwick
New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich; 114 pp., $15.95

◆

The philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein once mentioned the self-punishing limitations of his projected but never written autobiography: "I cannot write my biography on a higher plane than I exist on. And by the very fact of writing it I do not *necessarily* enhance myself; I *may* therefore even make myself dirtier than I was in the first place." Mary McCarthy, paraphrasing Orwell's essay on Salvador Dali, agrees that this genre demands a devastating honesty that often forces the writer to portray herself in a negative light: "an autobiography that does not tell something bad about the author cannot be any good."

McCarthy was the American equivalent of the English bluestocking, Rebecca West. She was an extremely intelligent Latinate stylist, subversive satirist, and skeptical observer of social nuance; a novelist, travel writer, literary and theater critic who was passionately interested in politics and ideas. This memoir—more sexual than intellectual—is thin, gossipy, fragmentary, and clearly unfinished (many obscure friends are not identified). And the striking anecdotes are rarely developed into serious and significant events. Nevertheless, this is a ruthlessly self-critical and tantalizingly interesting book.

This brief work is organized around two conflicts: political and personal. It begins two years after McCarthy had graduated from Vassar, when she was beginning her literary career by writing severe reviews in the *Nation* and *New Republic*. Though only slightly attracted to communism, she drifted into the *Partisan Review* circle and was caught up, during the purge trials, in the fanatic ideological wars between the Stalinists and Trotskyites. Her mentors on *Partisan* were passionately pro-Trotsky, but she was far too intelligent to swallow the party line. As Scott Fitzgerald (to whom McCarthy bore a remarkable physical resemblance) observed of Edmund Wilson's politics in the late 1930's: "A decision to adopt Communism definitely, no matter how good for the soul, must of necessity be a saddening process for anyone who has ever tasted the intellectual pleasures of the world we live in."

The young and beautiful McCarthy was also torn between husbands and lovers. She leaves her first husband, Johnsrud, but does not know why, and loses interest in her lover John Porter—whose main function was to dissolve her marriage—for equally vague reasons. Following the advice of an old teacher, she tried hard to "come to real love free of any neediness." But, having been orphaned as a young child, she never succeeded in reaching this pure state and became quite miserable when poor, loverless, and lonely.

Her innumerable lovers included the original of the hero of her story "The Man in the Brooks Brothers Shirt" who worked for a plumbing company in Pittsburgh, and an earnest communist actor who wore lifts in his shoes. McCarthy once had three different lovers within 24 hours. But she neglects to mention how she organized the logistics or what she did between sleeping with them. The main difficulty, however, was choosing between two high-powered literary critics: the gruff and rancorous Russian-Jewish Philip Rahv, who had dark lustrous eyes and "the look of a bambino in an Italian sacred painting," and the pop-eyed, pink-skinned, short, stout, and breathy Edmund Wilson, who stole her away from the passive Rahv. The first time she went out with Wilson, whom she called the minotaur and savagely portrayed as Miles Murphy in *A Charmed Life*, McCarthy got very drunk, passed out, and woke up in a strange hotel room with every reason to fear the worst. But she found herself next to her companion of the previous evening, the vain and dumpy Margaret Marshall, literary editor of the *Nation*.

At their second meeting, though not sexually attracted to Wilson, McCarthy allowed him to make drunken love to her. Still unclear about what she wanted, she absurdly agreed to marry him, against her inclinations, as punishment for having gone to bed with him. Though the marriage was over just after the wedding night, she remained with Wilson for seven more years. It is astonishing that McCarthy's penetrating, analytical mind had so little insight into the motives that influenced the crucial emotional decisions of her life.

Jeffrey Meyers writes from Kensington, California. His latest book is Edgar Allan Poe: His Life and Legacy *(Scribner's).*

Bad by Design

by Gregory McNamee

Turn Signals Are the Facial Expressions of Automobiles
by Donald A. Norman
Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley; 205 pp., $21.95

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A few months ago I went out into the Arizona desert to take photographs for a book of natural history I am writing. I had with me an expensive, late-model Japanese camera that might be advertised as "idiot-proof," had the manufacturer been less guarded in the tone of its publicity. In fact, the camera turned out to be, if anything, *too* idiot-proof; it refused to allow me to override its settings to underexpose or

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overexpose any given shot, a vexing enough situation given the day's alternating periods of bright sunlight and black storm clouds. The result was a series of photographs that were competent enough but less than dramatic, far inferior to those an old Brownie would have delivered.

With many advances in technology there follows a diminution of quality. Or so Donald Norman sets out to demonstrate in *Turn Signals Are the Facial Expressions of Automobiles*, which opens with an automatic-camera tale much like my own. The principal difference is that Norman, a professor of cognitive science at the University of California, San Diego, has both the technical wherewithal and the leisure to contemplate why grappling with unfriendly objects should fill so many of our hours. He's determined to change this sorry state of affairs.

Norman's excursuses on the grand question of bad design filled his book *The Psychology of Everyday Things* (1988), a curmudgeonly look at the construction of common objects. *Turn Signals* doesn't break much new ground, but instead supplements the author's earlier work. He announces at the outset his intention to scrutinize all new artifacts that might make our thinking and quotidian acting a little easier, and his commonsensical forays make for stimulating reading indeed—especially because their subjects, everyday objects around the house, are so familiar that we tend to take them and the headaches they occasion for granted. He finds most of those new artifacts wanting.

"Why," Norman asks, "does a simple thing like a door need an instruction manual in the form of the words 'push' or 'pull'?" A well-designed object, he argues, is self-explanatory. But, he continues, well-designed objects are increasingly rare; the present commodity culture places a higher value on esthetics than it does on utility, even with such things as cordless screwdrivers and dresser drawers and kitchen cabinets. Being concerned with "art," many designers don't seem to take into account what it is that people actually do with the things they concoct.

For that reason, perhaps, few objects are standardized. In a diverting exercise, Norman wanders around his home counting clocks and electric motors (he stops cataloging when he begins to wander onto the number of batteries he owns), pausing to pillory the makers of videocassette recorders, coffee makers, microwave ovens, and so forth. (It may be uncharitable to suggest that he doesn't really need all those trinkets.) Why, he wonders, must he be required to reset all those clocks whenever the power goes off during an electrical storm? Rather than go low tech, Norman arrives at a characteristically elegant solution: some designer somewhere, he ventures, ought to develop a master clock that communicates with all other electric clocks in a home; one that, when reset, synchronizes its slave units.

Norman's approach is trial by digression. Every now and again the chapters of his book seem connected only by the thinnest of threads—another instance *ahem* of too-subtle design. For the most part, however, the seeming discontinuities add up. He ponders why automobile dashboards, which bear critical controls, should be more poorly designed than turn and brake signals, which serve only to convey meaning to other drivers—whence the title of this slender book. He ranges widely from culture to culture to determine whether the American use of the refrigerator door as a family message center is a modern universal—and, when he discovers that it is not, cries out for some designer to find a more elegant solution to our communicative needs than the lowly refrigerator magnet. He skewers the unprovably dogmatic notion that humans use only one percent of their brainpower, remarking that in any event the other 99 percent is probably given over to redundant mechanisms that allow us to keep two thoughts going at the same time while still remembering to breathe.

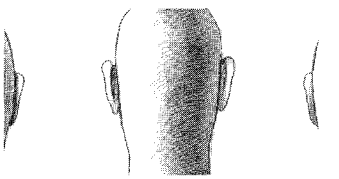
Most compellingly, Norman discusses the consequences of slovenly thinking and its bastard offspring, slovenly design. He remarks, "When I am told that more than half the world's accidents—home and industrial—are blamed on the people involved, I get very, very suspicious indeed." Airline accidents are routinely blamed on pilot error; Three Mile Island and Chernobyl were pegged on inattentive operators; and hospitals across the nation are daily overrun by the victims of technologically induced woes. For Norman, the makers of the knobs and panels and other doodads that cannot help but confuse those who confront them are the source of many of the world's ills, and if he sometimes wanders too deeply into conspiracy theory, well, so be it.

One need not be a technocrat, nor even especially interested in technological matters, to enjoy Norman's arguments, which more and more come to rank alongside the best of Lewis Mumford and Buckminster Fuller. The question remains: will the design of everyday things improve? It would be comforting to think that at laboratories and galleries across the technological world, designers are pouring over *Turn Signals*, but Norman remains a skeptic. "I have seen some of the technology of the future and it looks suspiciously like that of the past, except with fancier buttons and displays, and more elaborate hardware." For all that, he remains fixed on the quest, and he closes with a disquisition on the old English proverb, "If you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen."

Rubbish, he says. If that's the case, the thing to do is redesign the kitchen.

Gregory McNamee is the author of Christ on the Mount of Olives, *a book of short stories.*

LIBERAL ARTS



MALE RIGHTS

A federal District Court judge in Alexandria, Virginia, said expectant fathers "may file suits charging pregnancy discrimination," reported the *Chicago Tribune* last June. Scott Nicol, who lost his job six months after his wife told *her* employers she was pregnant, claimed "he was discriminated against on the basis of sex because of his wife's pregnancy." The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, which has jurisdiction in sex-discrimination cases, "told Jody and Scott they both had the right to sue," since Jody too had been fired because of her pregnancy. Susan Benton-Powers, a management and employment attorney in Chicago, said "Scott Nicol would have the right to file suit even if his wife did not sue." The case was recently settled out of court.

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Letter From South Carolina

by William P. Baldwin

Columbus in Columbia

The American Indians are on the warpath and with good reason, it would seem. For at least two hundred years their grave sites have been desecrated simply to satisfy the curiosity of the White Man. On the defensive, archaeologists are arguing that in all cultures studied graves are one of the best sources of information. The Indians say "so what?" and are demanding the remains of their ancestors and their grave goods be put back. The Indians are winning.

Good. Professional archaeologists, especially in recent years, have been playing dog in the manger with somebody else's manger, and as an amateur student of human endeavor, I've come to resent it. Local Indian sites from which I intended to take nothing were off limits. When I asked to see results from official digs (paperwork or artifacts) everything had been misplaced and everybody involved was on "vacation." The few times I found Indian bones washing out from banks, I've buried them deeper. Power to the Red People.

But not too much power. I'm sympathetic, but to a degree. I recognize the plight of minorities, (especially Celtic, male, Episcopalians), and I want all persons to live in harmony, but I'm totally baffled by the uproar surrounding this year's grand celebration of Columbus' discovery of America. Five-hundred years ago the *Nina*, *Pinta*, and the *Santa Maria* made a landfall that certainly changed my life for the better. I was taught this in a South Carolina elementary school along with how to sing the names of our forty-eight or so counties, and I have never had reason to doubt the validity of either lesson.

True, Columbus wasn't the first to discover America. Even back then, we were told about the Vikings, and in the years since everybody from the Phoenicians to Basque fishermen have had a go at the task. Columbus was just the first to make a difference. Except, now it turns out, he did it all wrong. "The Gem of the Ocean" was a tyrannical and inept seaman who blundered into a Caribbean paradise where he single-handedly introduced the evils of genocide and slavery. Yep, he invented genocide and slavery just for the trip and butter wouldn't melt on the tongues of the cannibalistic Carribs who were already there.

This is old business and a funny-not-so-funny business at that. (Voltaire made better use of it in *Candide* than I will.) Still, in these supersensitive times it's being approached with a fresh seriousness. The grand plans for the 500-year anniversary celebration were drastically scaled back. If possible the voyage would be ignored completely, but with wheels in motion it's necessary to follow through with some of that hair-shirt, self-accusatory lunacy we've all grown to love-hate. "Five centuries ago Columbus accidentally landed in America, but it wouldn't have happened if someone with compassion and foresight had murdered him in his crib." A celebration apologizing along these lines might allow us to hold status and quo together. Teddy Roosevelt won't get scraped off Mount Rushmore, Columbus Day can stay on a few calendars, and closer to home (mine) South Carolina's state capital can still go by the name of Columbia.

That's a best-possible scenario, though, and so I've started making contingency plans. When the committee forms to rename the capital, they'll certainly go through the charade of public input, and I plan to be ready. Naturally the name will have to be an Indian one, which in this state isn't such a drastic demand. Numerous places (rivers, towns, counties, and all manner of landmarks) are already going by Indian names. I'm writing this essay on the banks of Jeremy Creek, to the south is Sewee Bay and Tibwin Creek, to the west Wambaw Swamp, and to the north the Santee River. All are Indian names that have outlived their origins by at least 275 years. Though they might twist the words about and lop off a syllable or two, white settlers in this neighborhood kept the aboriginal names. I'm not sure why, but will be happy to guess.

Explorers and Indian traders (most were both) were the first to venture into these backwoods, and since they were spending most of their time with the Indians it didn't make much sense to call a stream the Rubicon or the Thames. If they were literate, they maintained this prejudice in their correspondence and on the crude maps they made (fancier versions were simply copies of these). Early settlers picked up these names and in the interest of property rights they were put on plats and entered into public record. Of equal importance was the oral tradition, always a relatively conservative source of information. If your pa called it the Santee River, so did you and your children.

That's my guess, but another has been often suggested. The Indian name was an integral part of the New World Adventure—the Grand Romance of Eden Discovered. Yes, but the country around me was named at the beginning of the 18th century, and on this side of the Atlantic, that sort of romanticism tended to be a luxury of the 19th century, just as the cult of sensibilities has become the luxury of our own. Washington Irving, of Knickerbocker fame, wrote that he favored returning to "the original Indian names of places, and whenever they are striking and euphonious, and those by which they have been superseded are glaringly objectionable, to restore them." He'd replaced "Mill Creek" with "Pocantico." A few years later (1826) Robert Mills, "America's First Architect," passed along the shores of Jeremy Creek where I sit writing, and said much the same. "It is to be regretted that more of the Indian names of places, streams, etc. have not been retained among us, as they would have rendered such places more interesting to us, and particular to future generations; their superior poetic sound would better grace the minstrel's song." Dismayed that his fellow engineers had numbered the creeks they were dredging, he restored the names and added an extra "my" syllable to this one: "Jeremymy." (He mapped the entire state, and then returned north to build the Washington Monument.)

Yes, I'm not the first to start putting Indian names back, but the sentiment

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of that last century leaves us only with some happy rhyming and the illusion of substantive meaning. The fact is, in this vicinity, the few Indian names that can be translated are simply mundane descriptions. Santee probably means "the big river," and most of the rest are also references to water in some form. That just won't do for a state capital like "the glaringly objectionable" Columbia. If we're to rename it we've got to have something both poetic and meaningful, and I won't risk another commemorative to some fleeting value judgment or tyrannical inept rascal.

So, then, a Cherokee translation of "Place where, last year, 21 legislators were convicted of accepting bribes" might do. Or maybe "Place where archaeologists once misplaced artifacts and paperwork and stayed on vacation." This is fun, but I've got to get serious. How about a Catawba translation of "Place where canoes are routinely paddled from both ends against the middle"? I'm afraid that's it for me, unless the rules can be bent to include General William Tecumseh Sherman. Consider this: General Sherman was named in part after Tecumseh, a Shawnee chief of admirable talents—among them the ability to defeat United States soldiers. In addition, the Union general wasn't so inept that he couldn't find Columbia and burn it down. Plus, his men didn't consider him tyrannical. Shermantown. Yes, I like that. It rolls off the tongue. It purges us.

William P. Baldwin writes from McClellanville, South Carolina.

Letter From the Lower Right

by John Shelton Reed

Trivializing Rape

◆

Last spring I picked up our student newspaper to read this sentence in a front-page story: "Statistics show that one out of every four UNC females will be sexually assaulted while in college." Wow. The University of North Carolina has roughly 15,000 undergraduates (leave the graduate students out of it), something over half of them female. So that would mean, oh, 450 or 500 assaults on previously unassaulted undergraduates every academic year, or about 16 or 17 a week. Surely I'd have heard about this. I mean, if it's that bad, anyone who sends a daughter to Chapel Hill is making a big mistake. Forget UNC: put her in purdah. At least give her a sidearm—she'll have more use for Smith and Wesson than for Strunk and White.

I suspected that what we had here was a factoid. I figured there'd be a long, long trail a-winding from the *Daily Tar Heel* to anything that could be considered a reliable source, but I resolved to follow it. For you, dear reader—for you.

In the event, the trail could have been longer. The student reporter told me that she got the figure from a friend, who got it from a book assigned in a women's studies class. Strictly speaking, she said, it applied to American colleges in general, not UNC in particular, but several sources had told her that UNC was not unusual in this respect. Well, OK, but I still didn't believe it, so I went to the library and got the book, *Feminist Fatale: Voices From the "Twentysomething" Generation Explore the Future of the Women's Movement*, by Paula Kamen. It sent me to another book: *I Never Called It Rape: The* Ms. *Report on Recognizing, Fighting, and Surviving Date and Acquaintance Rape*, by Robin Warshaw. That cited several articles reporting a survey of 6,100 undergraduates at 32 colleges, conducted in 1985 by Mary P. Koss, Ph. D., with support from the Center for Antisocial and Violent Behavior of the National Institute of Mental Health. Back to the library one last time, for an article by Dr. Koss and two coauthors, all from Kent State University, called "The Scope of Rape," published in the *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology* in 1987, where I finally found something resembling data.

The point of all this bibliographical trivia, by the way, is just to show how these things work. A student reporter cites a fellow student who cites a pop feminist tract that cites a journalistic report which finally cites some serious research. To get the obvious questions answered (how was the sample drawn, what was the refusal rate, what were the differences between different kinds of schools, how were rape and attempted rape defined—just for starters) you have to dig.

I'll tell you what I found in a minute. First, though, some observations.

Once upon a time, back in what my teenager calls the "Dork Ages," we knew what rape was, and it was serious. As a matter of fact, until the Supreme Court interfered with us, first-degree rape was a capital offense in every Southern state. That may have had something to do with the relative absence in my youth of what has come to be called "date rape."

I believe it really was rare. Some time ago the columnist Hal Crowther wrote that he not only never heard the term when he and I were in college, he never heard of the phenomenon. This wasn't entirely because of our male friends' respect for women (although there was more of that around than you'd suppose, to read most feminist accounts of the period); it also had to do with self-respect. Real men didn't force themselves on women.

Hal's recollections squared with my own, although I wondered if he and I just knew unusually well-behaved guys, or if the rapists of our acquaintance simply weren't talking. But then I read an essay by Florence King on the subject. "Date or acquaintance rape is a phenomenon of the sexual revolution," she wrote, "and so foreign to my experience that I can't think of anything to say about it. In my day, when a woman told a man to stop, he stopped." Thank you, Miss King, for that testimonial to our generation.

So what's happened since 1965 or so? Well, aside from scrapping the death penalty, we've changed the definition of sexual assault. By law, in most states, it now includes not just sex acts accompanied by physical force or threats of violence, but those made possible by the victim's diminished capacity due to drugs or alcohol. I'm glad that's illegal—don't get me wrong. But maybe we ought to call it something else.

Let me tell a story. A while back, at a hearing in these parts about discrimination against homosexuals, the manager of a gay bar (call him "Jim") told a remarkable tale. He said that he met another man in a convenience store; they picked each other up (or however these things work) and repaired to a nearby motel where, ah, nature took its course. Then, to Jim's surprise, his new friend attacked him with a pair of scissors, calling him names that reflected unfavor-

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ably on their shared sexual orientation. When Jim escaped and went to the police to report this assault, the policeman he told reminded him that sodomy is illegal in North Carolina and suggested that he might want to think twice about pursuing the matter. Believe it or not, the point of Jim's story was that both the policeman's attitude and the epithets his assailant used were evidence of ubiquitous "homophobia," requiring new civil rights laws to protect its victims.

Spare me. Come on, is it really hardhearted to deny this guy 100 percent USDA Choice victim status? Is it unreasonable to observe that someone who gets naked with strangers in rented rooms is taking his or her chances? I'm awfully glad it's not my political party that has to pretend to take this kind of thing seriously.

Anyway, consider the question, "Has anyone ever tried to take advantage of you when you were drunk?" If every woman who answers "yes" is now to be counted a victim of sexual assault, inevitably we're going to devalue the term. Sure, whatever grubby sexual transaction takes place between a couple of commode-hugging drunks is wrong, and if it's not "consensual" it ought to be criminal, and you can call it rape if you want to. But I'm sorry, it's not something I'm going to lose a lot of sleep over. Victimhood, like the dollar, isn't what it used to be.

Now, please, I'm not suggesting that drunk or drugged women "deserve it." Being drugged is prima facie evidence of illegal activity and so is being drunk for anyone under 21, but even criminals have rights, and just being stupid isn't a crime at all. We old-fashioned guys believe there's no excuse for what, yes, we still call taking advantage of a woman, and we don't object to punishing a man who does it. We also believe, however, that there's a qualitative difference between that and raping her at knifepoint, and if the law doesn't recognize that difference it really *is* an ass.

But Suzanne Fields, writing in *Heterodoxy*, a feisty new chronicle of campus folly, observes that when a New York *Post* editorial called for a legal distinction between stranger rape and sex preceded by "consensual activities" like drinking, visiting a man's hotel room, or walking on a deserted beach at 3:00 A.M., it caught hell. I can believe that. As I write, our local D. A. is being harassed by the thought patrol for a memo to our police pointing out that North Carolina law requires some evidence of resistance for a rape charge to stick. As the law stands, just saying "I don't think we should be doing this" isn't enough. In fact our D. A. wants to see the law changed to add the crime of third-degree rape, but that doesn't satisfy those who want to blur distinctions and conflate all involuntary sexual activity (and possibly, as Suzanne Fields suggests, to portray rape as the paradigm for all heterosexual relations, but that's another story).

It's clear where we're headed. Increasingly the rape theorists are invoking the nebulous and slippery concept of "psychological coercion." According to *Heterodoxy*, a pamphlet at Swarthmore already defines "acquaintance rape" as "ranging from crimes legally defined as rape to verbal harassment and inappropriate innuendo," and Stanford's Judicial Affairs Office interprets coercion, outlawed by the student code, to include "belittlement" or "verbal pressure." Just as sexual harassment (a real and serious problem that, incidentally, did exist in my youth) has been trivialized by being stretched to include all sorts of unpleasant behavior and bad manners—and, in some versions, to be defined in the mind of the "victim" (if you feel harassed, you are harassed)—so we seem to be on the way to defining as a rapist some clown whose idea of foreplay is a couple of hours of begging. Fortunately, I'm not the first to observe that this really does demean women, who aren't all *that* helpless.

But what about that statistic (I hear you say)? Well, to make a long story short, I never did find the "one in four while in college" number—surely you'd have to ask graduates to get that, or do some tricky extrapolation from undergraduates' reports—but what I did find makes it plausible, given the study's definitions. Fifteen percent of the undergraduate women surveyed reported sexual encounters since age 14 that met its definition of rape, and another 12 percent reported encounters that met its definition of attempted rape; 17 percent had had one or the other sort of encounter in the past year. There really is a lot of nastiness out there, and something has indeed gone very wrong since my college days. But not all the nastiness is what most of us think of as "rape." Not even most of its victims think of it that way. According to Suzanne Fields (who must have seen some data I missed), 73 percent of the women the study said had been raped didn't think they had been—plainly candidates for reeducation—and 42 percent had intercourse with the "assailant" on a later occasion.

By the way, although the study's definition of sexual assault sticks to encounters that most states would treat that way, it did ask about sex acts resulting from "continual arguments and pressure," a wooing strategy rephrased at one place in the text as "coercion," at another as "menacing verbal pressure." You get the drift.

It's a shame that the study muddies the water this way, because the situation it documents is bad enough. By the FBI's more stringent definition, which doesn't include the alcohol and drug scenarios, 8 percent of these young women had been sexually assaulted in the past year. If the same ratio holds, 11-12 percent will be assaulted at some point while in college—not "one out of four," but more than enough to be alarmed about. (And there's no reason to question the sample. It's true that students at religious colleges were less than half as likely to have been assaulted, and religious colleges were underrepresented in the sample, but not enough to make a major difference in the estimates.)

It's interesting that the study also included a similar sample of college men. Five percent of them acknowledged behaviors in the previous year that the FBI would consider rape or attempted rape: 1.8 percent and 3.3 percent, respectively. The difference between that 5 percent and the 8 percent of women who reported having been assaulted is no doubt partly due to underreporting (even most rapists are smart enough not to trust a researcher's promise of anonymity), but it may also reflect the fact that many of our campuses have become stalking grounds for predators from "the community." Campus security is a genuine problem, and one that might be easier to address than acquaintance rape—but it doesn't carry quite the same satisfying ideological freight.

Anyway, to return to my diatribe about blurring distinctions, the real problem, I think, is that treating all this stuff as equivalent makes it less likely that we'll come down hard on the gen-

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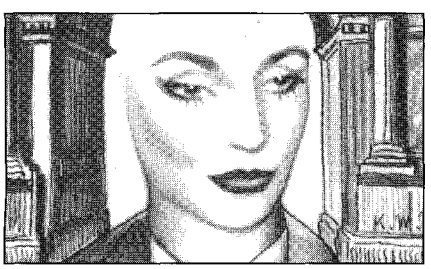
uine bad-asses. Even the folks who get most het up about date rape don't seem ready to *do* much about it. A couple of years ago, for instance, Donna Shalala, the politically correct chancellor of the University of Wisconsin, was asked by *Time* magazine what her school was doing about the problem. After some conventional blather about preventing it by education, communication, and counseling, President Shalala said this: "If it occurs, you've got to be as tough as possible. In some cases throw someone out of school, force him into some kind of education program." Right. At my own school, in 1989, rape was made a violation of the Student Code. Big deal.

President Shalala's idea of how to get tough with rapists illustrates the sort of wooly-mindedness and sentimentality that we encounter all the time on modern college campuses. Why, after all, should a university have a policy about rape? We don't have one about homicide. If we're really dealing with rape, not just second thoughts the next morning, we're talking about crime. "Throw someone out of school"? Naw, let him stay in school—if he can figure out how to do it while pulling, say, ten to twenty years of hard time. And *there's* an "education program" for you. From what I hear about our prisons, chances are the swine will acquire a better understanding of rape from the victim's point of view than he ever imagined was possible.



Incidentally, just a couple of months after the *Tar Heel* reported that a quarter of our female students will be assaulted, a letter-writer to the weekly *Spectator* upped the ante. "In a college town such as Chapel Hill," he wrote, "one-third of the women will face a rape or sexual assault situation during their residency." If that rate of increase keeps up, we'll hit 100 percent in a little over a year and a half.

John Shelton Reed teaches at the University of North Carolina, in Chapel Hill, and has two daughters.

Letter From Austria, Part II

by Donald Warren

A New European Identity

◆

In Europe today there is a youthful yearning for a new genesis and a desire to overcome the legacy of World War II. While a facile model of one generation rejecting the last is a tempting one to offer as explanation, in fact, the emerging "New Right" seeks both a connection and a rejection to provide both an identity with and autonomy from the past. Its goal: independence from American "occupation," a striving to shape a special place for Europe on a planet that no longer places her at the center of economics, culture, and politics.

Diverse and multistranded, the New Right movement draws its strength from the energy and idealism of European youth. It seeks a return to a peoplehood not tied to a nationalized and bureaucratized mass society, and celebrates an ethnically based multinational Europe. In central Europe this means the inevitable economic dominance of Germany. For the French and British factions, the latter point is omitted.

Who are the cultural enemies of the New Right? French Revolutionary ideals and their modern expression in state-initiated liberalism, including both the New World exports of North America and the more clearly socialist versions of Western and Eastern Europe. With the fall of the Marxist-created states, the battle is to win over the hearts and minds of Europeans from the American-style consumer colonialism lying to the west and perhaps soon to be enthroned in the east.

Imposing no new false uniformity of self, this movement celebrates its intellectual openness and pluralistic European fullness. Its adherents possess an *élan* born of affluent societies that are regarded as corrupt and "soft," offering nothing to its youth but flaccid popular culture, a consumption madness symbolized by the peripatetic golden arches of the "local" McDonald's. They seek a mobilization of the will to throw off New World domination. While recognizing that it has a "marketing problem" based on the heritage derived from the "old right," its anti-establishment activists believe that they have surpassed these vestigial remains of a failed and repudiated (by them and the world at large) National Socialism that they see as having distorted and perverted the values they share. The consensus today: "We shall do it *right* this time."

Rejecting a world devoid of struggle against evil, the youthful intellectuals of the New Right prime themselves for a long struggle and visualize playing a vital role in political restructuring. The ultimate enemy is American mass culture. The lone foe stands at the gates, providing the imperative for a legion of youthful intellectuals determined to defend their fortress, Europe.

While recently residing in Austria, I had the opportunity to observe firsthand the emerging trends among young intellectuals who are creating new bases of political thought and organization. One of these young editorialists is Jurgen Hatzenbichler, a 23-year-old university student and native of the southern city of Klagenfurt, capital of the province of Carinthia. Hatzenbichler is a mainstay contributor to a variety of youth-oriented intellectual publications, including the *Aula* and *Identitat* magazines and *Junge Freiheit*, the monthly newspaper of the *Ring Freiheitlicher Jugend*, the student affiliate of the "Freedom Party" led by Jörg Haider.

A day spent interviewing this intensely focused student intellectual *cum* political polemicist provided insight into the mind-set of young Europeans who are casting off elements of a failed radical left and radical right and reaching instead toward an ethic of individualism derived from 19th-century liberalism that shares ideas with the best of American populist thought. Highlights of the interview follow.

Q: You feel you are part of a new movement in Europe. Were you searching for something original, and if so, have you found it?

A: Yes, at first it was emotional, but now it is on an intellectual level. For a short time, I went to the left after rejecting the "old right" of National Socialism. I am oriented to a revolutionary new direction of nationalism that has been influenced by the writers and thinkers of the New Right. I would say there is a need to have a revolution, but not to build a new totalitarianism that seeks to rule the world with hollow values. To be part of a mighty intellectual

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stream, it is necessary to clearly identify what is the enemy. . . . And for me, the main enemy is not communism, but liberalism. I think liberalism is very similar to Marxism, but the problem is that it is more viable than communism, and therefore it is more dangerous.

Q: You identify yourself as part of the New Right intellectual movement in Europe. Does this imply that it is also a political movement?

A: Not at all. It is a movement of discussion groups and not of politics. Its purpose is to change values, to deal with ideas. A party is hunting voters, so [it] *has* to sell values. And I think the main concern of the New Right as an intellectual movement is that ideas are not to be sold out.

Q: If New Right intellectuals like yourself were to become completely involved in politics, would they lose contact with the New Right as an intellectual movement? Is that happening here in Austria?

A: I would not say so. I see this as prevalent with the French New Right. Here in Austria, there is a kind of intellectual vacuum within the national-liberal Freedom Party, the *Freiheitliche Partei*. The New Right has some possibility of filling this vacuum, and I think this is an important role. But it is not the future of an intellectual movement to be merely involved in party politics.

Q: This experience of intellectuals jumping into practical politics too readily can result in a certain cynicism if you "have your fingers burned," and it leads one to withdraw and never enter politics again. The result is that one can never influence the direction of politics.

A: We [in Austria] are *doing* politics, but we are doing it with another style. We are doing it intellectually. Not by organizing masses, but by producing ideas. This is what is called "metapolitics."

Q: And what form does this dissemination of ideas take?

A: Practically speaking, it means publishing newspapers, magazines, books. Writing articles. Yes, if people fail to read it, then they won't be influenced.

Q: Is this the first stage of raising the consciousness about the ideas of the movement or is this a continuing stage? Is this step one, to create a viable political impact, or is it the only stage?

A: Perhaps it is only stage one. You could say it's a long-term project. We are dealing with ideas and possibly sometime in the future a political movement will be able to use them, and to realize and achieve some of them, but this is not our problem as New Right intellectuals. This is a different self-concept, I believe, from what I might call the politically active ideologue. This is the more traditional way in which intellectuals became involved in politics. To have to put both feet in, or both feet out. We are trying to find a new way in which to maintain our autonomy, yet still have the potential to influence.

Q: Let me indicate another danger. I would make the analogy between new ideas and giving birth to a child. As a parent, you may try to instill the best values in the child, but once they go out into the world, you do not have any control. Is it possible that if the New Right gives birth to new ideas, these children will go out into the world without you knowing what mischief and trouble they might get into?

A: I think this interpretation is correct, but it is not our duty to bring ideas into the world and then leave them alone in a room. They must be entered into a social discourse and perhaps even old left or old right intellectuals may use them in a sense that we wouldn't. So you must always correct your ideas each step of the way.

Q: Of course, there is always the question of perception. You were bringing up the question of what I call the "necessary evil" of marketing. Is there a marketing problem that the New Right must deal with in order not to fall into traditional "errors" and lose its capacity to grow?

A: The New Right is not a mass movement. It is a recent movement and, of course, we have to sell our ideas. So we have to produce newspapers, magazines. First these magazines try to reach the political class, the intellectual class.

Q: Is that equivalent to the term "target audience"?

A: Of course, but it is different from country to country. For example, I think the Italian and French New Right were able to have very good discussions with the left intellectuals. Open discussions with a very high standard. In Germany this is really not possible, because of the antifascist content of the society. But it is becoming better. So from the right of the political spectrum, we are stepping over the boundary to the center. Slowly, but we are doing it. At first, our ideas were only heard on the right, of course. On the old right. Now they have begun to break into the national-liberal and the national-conservative groups. This is mainly with the intellectuals, not with the masses. But it is a step forward.

Q: Now from the other side, how does the party see you and the movement? What is their perception?

A: In general I think the party has tried to attract as many voters and "fans" as possible. They are interested in having "think tanks." But a part of the party will not like our ideas, so it is sometimes a struggle to coexist in the party. This is another reason why I am against the concept of parties. They may use our ideas, but we shouldn't be the "fans" of a certain party. We should see the whole society, and we should be critical. We should be able to say what is right and what is wrong. Our ideas have to be oriented to reality, not on the side of a party. A [political] party is *always* separate.

Q: You seem to be saying that the practical side of a social movement has its expression in a political movement. Is there some special form of organization that makes the *Freiheitliche Partei* more viable, more effective?

A: I think it's several main principles. First of all, its political leader must have rapport with the various streams within the party, *integration secours*. While there are important core ideas of the party, the content is not as important as the modernity of the style.

Q: Can you give me a good working example of a recent question in Austrian policy where there was a difference in the effectiveness of what would be called in the United States "marketing" strategy?

A: Yes, for example, the Freedom Party's leader is a person of content. His character is youthful and dynamic, and the [techniques of persuasion] are quite modern. This bears on the problem, of course, of American mass culture in Europe or in Austria. In my own interview with party leader Haider, he described his style of the FPO as the most Americanized of all Austrian parties. It is treating politics no longer as only something that deals largely with ideology, but also as a thing of free time, of fun. When you go to some party meetings—not all, but some party meetings—they now are shows. People want to have fun and bread, and from the party they get

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fun. There is also the personalization [of candidates]; this is the Americanization of European politics.

Q: Do you see the danger of this?

A: Of course, I think there is a great danger. The political parties are losing all the ideas. They all went to a mainstream they call *mitte*—"middle." For example, Social Democrats say they are the party of the middle. Christian Democrats say they are the party of the middle. National-liberals once said *they* were a party of the middle. Now they are saying "we are middle right." And so, a liberal mainstream that is not ideologically liberal takes all political streams and mutilates them. All become the same. And this is the Americanization of the European political style. This is one of the reasons why I say, as an intellectual, I do not have to be a man "of the party."

Q: In the beginning of our discussion, you identified the target as liberalism, and you indicated the source was the "West"—America in particular. How do you see the relationship between the former East Bloc countries, in comparison with developments of the New Right with the West? And when you think about the overall concept of the New Right and the framework, do you see it including all of the European Continent, including the East, or do you see it in a more limited way?

A: To the first question, I think the New Right has the possibility to go East, but just because of this collapse, the ideological collapse in the East. The East is open, diffuse. They do not really know which values they want or need. Of course, democracy . . . the first step, in the East, is that they are becoming consumers. And then they will look for new values. So I think that the New Right has possibilities to win intellectuals in these countries. Of course, they will have their own view of things, an Eastern view. But it is good that a Continental concept be part of the New Right. The East belongs to Europe. The East is vital to Europe.

During the last 40 years, Europe—or Western Europe—was looking to the West as a virtual slave of the United States. This can now be corrected through the East. We have to focus our European tradition. When we say that "liberalism" is the main enemy, and at this moment, that means Americanism is the main enemy. Its ideas are changing Europe—are destroying Europe.

Europe is losing its own identity. And by losing its own identity, it is losing strength and will become merely a new kind of United States. I am not speaking of united Europe in a political, but rather, in a cultural sense. In this plane we have a structure that is different from that of the United States in terms of ethnicity and national identities and in its traditions. This must be saved, because this is our strength. The greater European structure is composed of highly differentiated internal forms that are coherent in themselves. The East is an integral part, so that the "re-Europeanization" of these former Soviet states is a necessary and positive goal.

Q: You identify yourself with the intellectual roots of German conservative thought that is quite different from National Socialism . . .

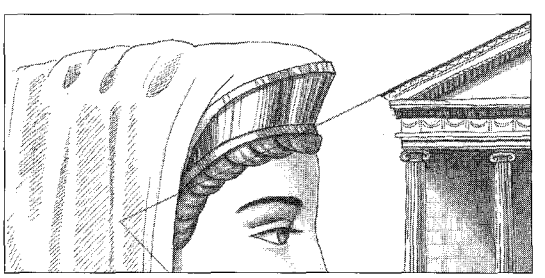
A: I think it is very important to have a clear understanding of German and European history on the main question of National Socialism. It contained many different streams of thought. There were socialist streams, and many people were executed for following this commitment. If the New Right had existed at the time of the Third Reich, these intellectuals would have been put in concentration camps, just as were German conservatives. There is a very important difference between a conservative revolution and National Socialism.

Q: You frequently write for the magazine *Aula*, which identifies with the young intellectuals who are concerned with the preservation of national identity. What do you see as the essence of this issue?

A: We must rethink the concept of nation. The time of the nation-state is past, and the time of the regionally consolidated nation has come. What do boundaries and citizenship matter in view of the new developments within Europe? This is an explosive question, especially when we see that tomorrow we will be Europeans, belonging to a special nation in the cultural sense of the word. It is our duty to supply new ideological weapons, to enter into debate, to accept the challenge and make ourselves heard with a strong voice. And our voice is different. We take positions, and we don't mean in a vaguely liberal *Ortlosigkeit* [placelessness], but along a liberal-nationalist line, in a tradition that is conservative as well as revolutionary, that works for national liberation as well as liberation of citizens to have freedom of expression. We have the courage to be different. Long live the difference!

Donald Warren is a political sociologist and author of The Radical Center *(1976).*

LIBERAL ARTS



WHITEWASH

According to the *Rocky Mountain News* last May, Aims Community College in Greeley, Colorado, has refused to award a scholarship established for a "full-time Caucasian woman student." This decision came after a complaint from Jorge Amaya of the League of United Latin American Citizens. Mike Geile, president of the college's foundation overseeing scholarships, said "the condition of the trust limiting the scholarship to a Caucasian student was not appropriate to the goals and objectives of the foundation." The college's president, George Conger, acknowledged that "the college has supported other scholarships open only to certain minorities." The donor of the scholarship fund, Ruth Junius Youder, intends to withdraw her money if the "Caucasian woman" stipulation is not met.

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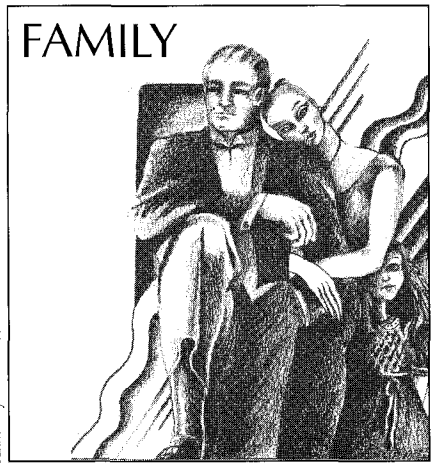

Anna Mycek-Wodecki

My Former In-Laws

by Thomas O. Jones

Christopher Columbus' North American Descendants

My former in-laws in the United States are direct descendants of Christopher Columbus. This is fact. It will now be demonstrated. No other family in North America can make this claim. These worthy people are the Boals. Their ancestral home in America is a tiny village called Boalsburg in central Pennsylvania. I'll attempt to explain, without the bias of a former in-law, why the Boals aren't better known, or known at all, in this quincentennial year of Christopher Columbus.

In 1908, the Boals inherited the family chapel of the Christopher Columbus castle in Spain. The bequest included both the stone masonry of the chapel and the many priceless objects inside. In 1909 Theodore Boal—known as Terry—brought these materials across the sea to Boalsburg, where he reassembled the chapel. In 1912 he built a small, stone barnlike structure to enclose the chapel. The only genuine Columbus museum in the New World had been established.

The Columbus chapel can hold only 35 people. Any visitor with a historic sense will stare in wonder at the objects inside. It even has the trunk Columbus took on his voyages, where it functioned as a desk and in which he stored his nautical studies. There is also a large silver cross that Columbus owned. If he did not hold this particular cross when first stepping onto the new land, he carried a similar one. Also transported from Spain were swords belonging to the Columbus family, other personal heirlooms of the great explorer, a small casket containing relics (a gift to the Columbus castle in Spain in 1817), a church maniple more than five-centuries old, and carved Renaissance statues of saints. To enter the Boalsburg chapel is to enter the Spanish Renaissance. Masterpieces of oil painting adorn the walls, including the *Pieta* by Ambrosius Benson (circa 1535) and *The Sacrifice of Isaac* by Ribera (circa 1615).

Terry Boal, an international adventurer and war hero had brought home to the tiny town bearing his name the only collection of personal belongings of Christopher Columbus on this continent. He had been studying architecture in Paris in 1894—his stone encasing around the Columbus chapel was done by an experienced hand—and in a whirlwind courtship he met and married the lovely Mathilde Denis de Lagarde. Mathilde provided the family-tree connection with Columbus. When she inherited the Columbus chapel and treasures in 1908, Terry brought this collection, stones, mortar, and paintings to Boalsburg the following year.

I encountered a pleasant, well-educated, hardworking, middle-class Boal family in the early 1960's, in a growing suburb outside Los Angeles. These Boals lived a short drive on uncrowded freeways from Pasadena, California, home of the Rose Bowl football game. The Boal family living nearby was not notorious (or acclaimed) for their puns, but they did name their eldest daughter Rose Boal. Rose became my wife for three years, from 1969 to 1972, and this brief young marriage allowed my only connection with world history on a grand scale.

I must mention that "Rose" was her middle name, though this did not prevent her from the same teasing I receive for being baptized Tom Jones. We at least started off with something in common. Today Rose's desire for anonymity from the Columbus spotlight could be intense, and her fondness for me small, so I'll kindly refrain from mentioning her first name or other identifying facts—with the exception that she did like to sail. She was a tall, graceful, athletic woman. She could sail a small unmotored craft over turbulent waters with skill and ease. Her father was also an expert sailor, and found shipboard life more challenging and exciting than his house in the suburbs. Rose affectionately called him Pilot. Today my former father-in-law lives on his boat, docked somewhere on the California coast, and applies for honorary seaman's titles. To insist Christopher Columbus was the source of these traits, which Pilot Boal passed on to Rose, would be ludicrous, though it has given me occasion to ponder, especially during this quincentennial year. Rose and I didn't have children, but it's likely they'd have been introduced early to toy boats.

I also can't avoid letting red hair enter the discussion. The Christopher Columbus of Genoa had red hair, as did many of his descendants, including remote descendants, like my in-laws. Other common factors? All were stubborn. All were too widely read not to believe they could sail off into any direction without falling off an edge.

I do not expect to be even a tiny footnote to history, though my all-too-brief connection with the discoverer of my native land interests me. Sixty years after Terry and Mathilde Boal inherited the Columbus chapel in Spain, I began my own whirlwind courtship of Rose Boal near Pasadena, and 61 years after Terry Boal brought home the Columbus treasures, I married his descendant. The guests at our wedding chuckled and giggled at the most solemn part of the ceremony due to our hilarious names—"Tom Jones, do you take Rose Boal to be your . . ." Back then Rose and I were young 60's people, baby boomers from the lily-white suburbs, intensely involved with reading about the social injustices around us, two generous and caring people, defining our politics of compassion by our hair-lengths and the number of decals and patches on our jeans. Yet we cared enough for our families to wed in traditional attire, like the little plastic bride and groom figures on our cake,

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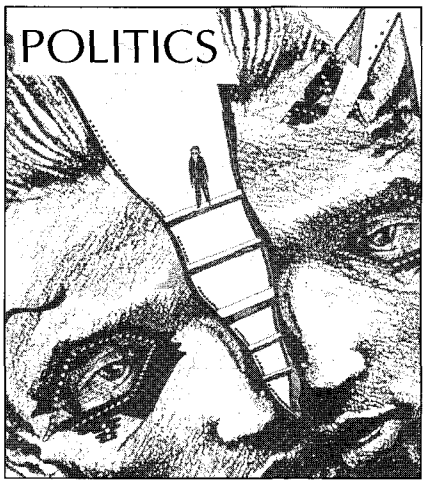
and we accepted the chorus of laughter as we made our vows in a generous spirit. This carefree start made our divorce more poignant.

This year marks the 20th anniversary of our separation and divorce. Unlike the sailor from Genoa, Rose and I are not making the covers of news magazines, and scholars are not holding conferences to present papers and panel discussions on our problems. Yet the date 1992 marks an important date in my own history. The pain of our marriage's failure returns this year with heightened intensity, and I attribute this to the constant reminders caused by the quincentennial of Christopher Columbus. These aren't the sort of routine lovesick reminders that Chad and Jeremy would sing about. Perhaps that would be easier. I don't sigh when walking by soda shops or skating rinks, but rather when seeing a bronze statue of Columbus in the town square, sword in hand, looking ever outward.

Okay, 1492 was the big year in his life. But little folk also have anniversaries. In 1972 I was a perpetual graduate student and Rose worked for a mental retardation center. While I successfully avoided the Vietnam draft by advanced education and worked in the peace movement, Rose fell in love with her handsome and well-to-do boss, really a nice fellow, though I'd have been hard-pressed to admit it at the time. Rose married her new love. The grapevine tells me they've stayed together these past 20 years and have three children. I do not know how well these children sail. My advanced degree is still on hold. Dissertation topics are tricky things.

I don't need a therapist to understand why the voyages of Columbus fill me with sadness. If my attractive, athletic ex-wife had been a descendant of Danton or Robespierre—I'd prefer Danton—I'd have suffered painful memories throughout 1989, the bicentennial of the French Revolution. Anniversaries of loss are painful. Unfeeling friends send me calendars for Christmas, even calendars illustrated by boats and medieval cartography. The wounds reopen. If I marry again, I'll choose a woman descended from a historic figure with unavailable dates, lost in the mists of time, like Robin Hood or Buddha.

Thomas O. Jones writes from Bay City, Michigan.



Anna Mycek-Wodecki

Eugenio Corti

by Mario Marcolla

The fame of Italian writer Eugenio Corti hinges on two works: *I piu non ritornano: Diario di ventotto giorni in una sacca sul fronte russo, inverno 1942-43* (*Most Do Not Return: Diary of Twenty Days in a Pocket on the Russian Front, Winter 1942-43*) first published in 1947, and his great 1,280-page novel *Il Cavallo Rosso* (*The Red Horse*), published in 1983.

In print continuously in Italy and with sales measured in tens of thousands of copies, *I piu non ritornano* has for its epigraph the sentence of the Evangelist Mark: "Pray that it not arrive in winter." In fact, the catastrophe that brought agony and death to 80,000 Italian soldiers occurred in the hardest winter of World War II, in the bend of the Don River in Russia. Corti's account, based on his diaries written on slips of paper during the retreat from December 1942 to January 1943, constitutes an *Odyssey* of the Italian soldiers, fighting men transformed into "poor Christs" [in English we say "poor devils"—a significant difference?].

The strength of Corti's writing revealed in these diaries was an indication of his future literary fortunes. They offer, even to today's reader, vital matter for meditation; as is always the case, when humble people are sucked into the vortex of total war, the truth emerges with greater clarity—as clear as it is terrifying in the description of horrors, of mutilated piety, of inflexible evil, but also of charity unvanquished and of hope that dwells in "the secret waters of the heart."

The events are narrated with such careful regard for truth that the writer can vouch for the content of every single sentence. The story of the 35th Corps of the Italian army on the Russian front is generally known to historians of World War II, but the heart of this book (and it strikes us today with even greater force than in the period immediately after the war) is the vastness of the destruction, the unutterable violence and suffering.

In the telling it is not the war that is so terrifying as the unchained hatred of the Nazis and Soviets, the ruthlessness of the massacres, the routine killings that the Russians and the Germans perform as if the conflict were between demons. In the midst of such horror, the sole remaining consolation was faith, invoked in the evening with the recitation of the holy rosary and in prayers to the Virgin, amid the delirium of the wounded and the cries of men freezing to death.

The narrative is realistic, day after day, hour after hour, along the calvary of the long human column walking westward. "The European Civil War," in Ernst Nolte's apt description, which from 1914 to 1945 tore Europe to pieces, unfolds one of its chapters in these pages: it was a result unforeseen by the Italians who were trapped in the vise of an incomprehensible collision that had not been included in any war plan. Fire, snow, and ice, primordial elements which instead of discharging their natural and beneficial functions were in revolt to torture the flesh, to cut down, with fear, young lives that were transformed step-by-step into dark frozen specters.

Thus appears the Valley of Death, on Christmas night of that year, around the Russian village of Arbusov:

> In this way we leave the Valley of Death: the village was half destroyed, many huts burned, and many civilians—old men, women, children, killed in the battle or by the Germans out of hatred. We left behind a wall of corpses, spread everywhere: dead Germans, apathetic, Russians shot down at some point in regular files of ten, and our men, by far the most numerous, killed by enemy bombardment or fallen in waves of bayonette assaults, dead

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> from starvation, dead from cold. . . . Most agonizing of all was the thought of the thousands of the dead, the hundreds upon hundreds of wounded men abandoned on the snow, on a little straw. . . . You who read these pages, do you know what it means?"

This question, hurled from the depths of tragedy, will haunt the writer's entire literary life. Passing by other books of which we shall speak later, Eugenio Corti spent years preparing himself for his great work, the historical novel of our age, *Il Cavallo Rosso*, whose composition occupied 11 uninterrupted years of his intellectual life. Corti and his novel are rooted deep in the earth of his fathers, in the green and hilly land of the Brianza, which from Monza (ancient capital of the Longobards) extends up to Lecco and to the gates of Como (an area that is the setting of the 19th-century classic *I Promessi Sposi*).

Two generations of Italians, from 1940 to 1974, populate *Il Cavallo Rosso* (now in its ninth edition in Italy, published last year in Spanish by Rialp Publishing in Madrid, with French, English, Japanese, Lithuanian, and Romanian translations and an international televised version in 12 installments in progress). In the passage of time the characters are engaged, in war and in peace, in bearing witness to the Christian idea in every situation. But the surprising quality of this work is the result of the author's refusal to ally himself with any 20th-century school of Italian literature. Rather, as an historical novel, the only real analogies are such works as Hugo's *Les Miserables*, Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, Solzhenitsyn's *August 1914*, and Manzoni's *I Promessi Sposi*.

Corti is not an author to submit to intellectual compromises in order to reach the ninnies of the avant garde. As an iron man of the Brianza, he does not bow at the summons of the ideological and political utopias that design gulags and cemeteries for Europe and the world by the perversions of reason that pass for modern rationality. His line of departure is a land both severe and joyful; among his green hills and in the places made famous by Manzoni he garners a moral tradition from the living flesh of men and transfuses it into his characters who are directly experiencing the human condition of good Christians and, therefore, of good men. Ambrogio, Michele, Stefano, Pierello, Gerardo, Giustina, Alma, Marietta and so many others are three-dimensional beings, protagonists in a plot that leads them to bear witness to the ways marked out by Providence.

One must learn, see, reflect upon the atheist ideology that was implanted in Central and Eastern Europe in order to appreciate the clash between Nazi neopaganism and its Communist opposite number. Corti's observations on this convey a reality captured in blood, a metallic rationality of ideology that annihilates men in obedience to a perverse dream of regeneration. His characters find themselves in the vortex of destruction, and it is only the daily practice of prayer to God and to the guardian angels that saves them from dehumanization.

Corti is a master at illustrating such behavior without rhetoric and without obvious design. Conscious of man's fallen nature, he measures the responsibilities according to the idea and the practice of the good. He does not judge, but condemns only the irrationality of sin that has imbibed the distorted ideas of atheist humanism.

Like concentric circles in a pool of water, the chapters of this novel revolve around a fixed axis, in an order of persons and communities that must be preserved from destruction. The Brianza of fifty years ago from which his characters set out for war, is the model of a Christian society whose integrity is threatened by the atheist culture. It is not a question of words or of explicit expressions of faith so much as a reality that surmounts historical events and confirms the possibility of living as "integral men," in the presence of a transcendence that is light for beings and for things. It would be too long to trace the plot of this novel, which despite its simplicity, sums up all the recent history of Italy and even of Europe. Even if its characters appear today to be the losers, there remains the expression of a message and of a memory that passes from literature to life.

On the last page of his great book, Corti quotes significantly these verses from Eliot's "Little Gidding":

> See, now they vanish
> The faces and places, with the self
> which, as it could, loved them
> To become renewed, transfigured,
> in another pattern.

Truly, it is so, and the pattern is that of our life. I look around me, I force myself to remember; I see no other Italian author in this century capable of writing a novel of this intensity.

Between his debut with *I piu non ritornano* and his epic novel, Eugenio Corti inlaid his literary activity with other major works: *I poveri cristi*, *Il Communismo 'realizzato'*, *L'epoca di Paolo VI*, *S. Giorgio declassato e altri racconti*, and the long tragedy *Processo e morte di Stalin* (*Stalin's Trial and Death*), produced in Rome in 1962. Two years later, the work was translated into Russian and, in 1969, into Polish by dissident exiles from both nations. The Russian text was circulated in the Soviet Union by *samizdat*, and the Polish version earned him the title of Cavalier of Poland, given by the democratic government in exile.

The Lombard writer (born in 1921) continues his work, traveling throughout Italy week after week, speaking to packed audiences of young people and the not-so-young. Meanwhile other books (*Gli ultimi soldati del Re* will come out this year) are stored in his mind for the years that will accompany his old age and wisdom.

Mario Marcolla writes from Monza, Italy. This piece was translated from Italian by Thomas Fleming.

LIBERAL ARTS

MODEL RACISM

An owner of a condominium complex in Alexandria, Virginia, was fined $850,000 for advertising with "exclusively white models" because it "sent a message that blacks were not welcome there," reported the *New York Times* last May. Two "fair-housing" groups and a black law professor of Georgetown University filed the suit and argued that Colonial Village, the condominium complex, was in violation of the Fair Housing Act. Mack Benton, vice-president of the condominium development, was "amazed at the verdict" and called the amount absurd.

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Forgotten Voices

by George Watson

How Buchenwald Lived On

When I visited Buchenwald concentration camp, near Weimar, in 1988, in what turned out to be the last year of German partition, the Soviet Union's use of the camp for five years after World War II was hardly to be spoken of inside what, with memorable irony, was still called the German Democratic Republic; my research on this forgotten episode had to be done on the other side of the barbed wire, in West Berlin (see "Buchenwald's Second Life," *Chronicles*, July 1989). By a happy chance that article appeared only a few weeks before the Wall came down in Europe. But it is now clear that it was based on inadequate sources. My research had failed to discover any survivors from former Nazi camps maintained by the Soviets between 1945 and 1950—there was no one, it seemed, to be interviewed—and I was forced to depend on a few sparse documentary sources.

Now, with the Wall down, the past is speaking and the forgotten voices are being heard. In the summer of 1991 a survivor of Soviet Sachsenhausen, a major Nazi camp near Berlin, published recollections of his arrest as a teenager in May 1946 and his detention in Torgau, Bautzen, Sachsenhausen, and Waldheim, as well as inside the Soviet Union itself. His name is Benno Priess, and his little book, *Innocent in the NKVD Death-camps*, which includes photographs and the testimonies of several fellow prisoners, is self-published and obtainable only from the author. Mr. Priess, being a youthful victim, is still in his 60's, and he has a harrowing tale to tell. The book does not displace anything in my 1989 article, but it amplifies the detail and allows for a fuller picture of how the Soviet secret service and its East German allies used the Nazi camp system to destroy, without public trial, anyone they thought likely to be a nuisance.

The resemblances between Nazi and Soviet practices, as always, are telling: so telling that it is a question whether, in those grim postwar years of 1945-50, the Soviets were imitating the Nazis in their extermination methods or merely reclaiming a technique of mass murder they had imparted to their Nazi allies during the joint occupation of Poland in 1939-41. The Soviets had already used trains, and most characteristically cattle trucks, to empty eastern Poland of its Polish population in and after the spring of 1940; shortly thereafter the Nazis, who are known to have taken pride in their far longer experience in such matters, began a mass deportation by similar methods of dissidents and Jews. Benno Priess describes being crowded into his train, soon after the war, at the rate of forty to a wagon. The camp regime, when he arrived, was on a starvation diet and deliberately degrading. "A bullet is too good for you," a Russian guard once told him. "You will die slowly." Cut off since their arrest from all contact with the outer world, prisoners had no possibility of telling their families whether they were still alive, though many of them were not yet 18 years old, and it was not until 1949, or after four years of captivity, that they were allowed to send out their first letters. They were limited to 12 lines each, and even then they were not allowed to tell their relatives where they were; each letter, being censored, was headed by no more than a postcode. When an armed guard called at Priess' home and took him away at the age of 18, ostensibly for questioning, it was the last his parents heard of him for four years.

One of Priess' revelations is that his fellow Germans, the Communist officials who eventually replaced the Russians, were harsher than the Russians themselves as camp guards. Under East German administration brutality increased and the death rate in the camps rose, while the hospitals filled and overflowed with prisoners dying of starvation and tuberculosis. Finally, in March 1950, there was a prisoners' revolt at the camp in Bautzen, in Saxony. Prisoners shouted out of windows, "We want the German Red Cross, we are starving, help us," and the local population was roused by their cries. The German guards responded by beating their prisoners, a night that lived in memory as Hubert-Night.

Release came as late as January 1954, almost a year after Stalin's death and nearly four years after the Soviets and their German allies had closed down the old Nazi camp system of Buchenwald and Sachsenhausen and reverted, on the whole, to a more conventional prison system. In that month, Priess recalls, he was taken out of his cell and put in a room that quickly filled with other prisoners. The overseer suddenly seemed polite, and they rightly guessed that freedom was at hand. Next day they were given civilian clothes and taken by bus to a variety of railroad stations, so that the local population would notice nothing exceptional. On the train Priess, still only 26 years old, had thoughts only of a home and of parents he had not seen for nearly a decade. He could hardly believe he had survived a system at least as deadly as the Nazi camp system it had superseded. In Leipzig he sent a telegram to his parents announcing his return; and there, on his arrival at the station, they stood with his sister and many of his friends and acquaintances, and he embraced them in tears.

Though artlessly presented and only privately published, this is a book that does not deserve to be ignored. It is the fullest account there is by a survivor of the postwar Soviet extermination program in Eastern Germany: an episode now so thoroughly forgotten, even in Germany, that it still has the power to astonish and appall. Even in West Germany, after all, in the long years of partition, it was considered indecorous to mention the matter: partly because it might prejudice German unification, and partly because postwar Germans were rightly sensitive to the charge of seeking to shift the blame from their own past. That led to a silence, or near silence, on the matter of Soviet crimes. It is now hard to believe that the very installations of the Nazi terror machine—its camps, its vast barbed-wire enclosures, its barracks, and its incinerators—could have been used for five years by one of the allied powers for their original purpose, and with only occasional protests from the West. One can be sure it would have been far otherwise if the British had maintained Belsen as a killing-field for five years, or the Americans Dachau. Soviet censorship, with a little help from others, worked. Tens of thousands of prisoners, many of them not yet 18 years old, though tried for no criminal offense, were allowed to die in the heart of Europe in time of peace and for offenses they were never allowed to learn.

George Watson is a fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge.

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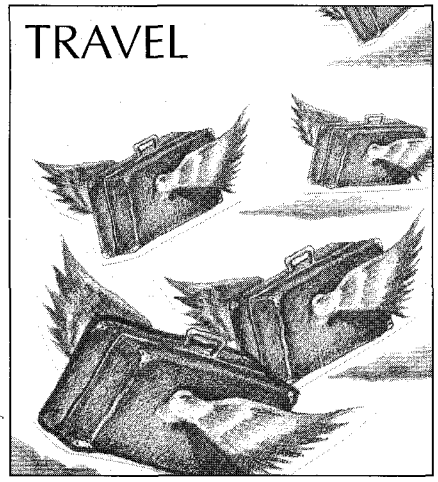

Anna Mycek-Wodecki

Gonna Take a Dysfunctional Journey

by Stephen Provizer

News Item: AMTRAK Derails North of New York City

Monday, 9:30 A.M.—Arose after an evening of drinking, soft-shell Jazz and mainstream crabs; oops—*dyslexia margarita*. My sister's cleaning lady arrives with an armload of Tito Puente records and an Electrolux without a muffler; I decide to skip coffee and head right to the train station; looking forward to a leisurely trip back to Boston nestled in the upholstered arms of AMTRAK, one of the last civilized modes of transport.

10:14 A.M.—The usual cheery ride on the subway—all ads about hemorrhoids, AIDS, bad teeth, upset stomach, bad feet, headaches, hair loss, and boils; all feature indistinguishable "before" and "after" examples. I leave car itchy, tick-ridden, woozy, and stiff.

10:30 A.M.—Penn. Station frantic; schedule board has my train—the 11:06 to Boston—"canceled." The information lady addresses herself to "all travelers to New England," and I hear for the first time the dreaded phrase—"Rerouting passengers by bus to New Rochelle."

10:50 A.M.—The ticket seller asks if I've heard about the accident north of the city. He himself is skeptical of the contingency plan and says—"Do you still want the ticket?" A little voice in my head says "Take the plane," but a dark vision of the mounting 18 percent monthly interest charge on my Visa card crushes it.

11:06 A.M.—Five hundred of us stand sheep-like on the street in front of the station, clutching our valuables to our bosoms; the passing of the original departure time is marked only by the low hum of people in blue uniforms loitering about, talking to each other on walkie-talkies.

11:15 A.M.—Two buses arrive and the rule of law no longer pertains; all five hundred try to jam their luggage in and climb on board; drivers and blue-shirts watch the process unfold dispassionately.

11:55 A.M.—Increasingly decrepit buses come and go in pairs, disgorging and loading. I finally board and am happy to sit next to the lovely, jocular Emily.

12:15 P.M.—I'm beginning to question our driver's decision to leave Manhattan via Madison Avenue; he goes from West 34th Street all the way to the northeast tip of Manhattan; passengers are growing restive.

12:45 P.M.—At last, arrival at New Rochelle. We pull into the station and another man in AMTRAK blue waves us out of the parking lot, around the corner to—where?

1:00 P.M.—A man sitting on a lawn chair in front of his split-level home looks up from his newspaper and wonders why a large, beat-up Carey bus, driven by a confused Latino, is careening wildly through his quiet suburban neighborhood. Sabotage afoot, *peut-etre*? Everyone knows trains and buses are the rat and terrier of the transportation world.

1:10 P.M.—Driver swallows pride and asks for directions at a gas station. Heckling from passengers growing bolder.

1:20 P.M.—We finally arrive at a train station; unfortunately, it's not the AMTRAK station. It may be as close as we'll ever get, but I'm deterred from defecting by ominous "Third Rail" signs.

1:25 P.M.—The use of amulets and incantations and the ritual dismemberment of a Garfield doll were extreme steps to take, but they seemed to have worked—we've found AMTRAK New Rochelle. Upon exiting the bus, I catch a look at the driver's name tag—"Ramon De Sade."

1:28 P.M.—The long wait for our arrival seems to have had an unnerving effect upon those waiting on the train: a man runs down the aisle, pursued by a woman who sprays him with soda while yelling "You bastard! That's my seat! I told you it was my seat!" Not the Love Train.

1:30 P.M.—There are no seats, per se, so we've settled in at a table in the dining car. The space under the table is completely taken up by other people's luggage, which means I can either have my legs battered in the aisle, or work on my Full Lotus position.

1:36 P.M.—The landscape seems to be moving past my window—obviously an elaborate hoax or hallucination.

1:37 P.M.—Neither; we're actually moving. A fat conductor comes lurching up the aisle, demanding our tickets and berating us for making his train late. "A healthy exception," I think to myself, "of the 'fat and jolly' syndrome." The phrase "knuckle sandwich" drifts over from a nearby table. This reminds me of my empty stomach, but there is no food in the dining car. They do offer us soft drinks—"because we care about you."

3:15 P.M.—We've come to "Old Saybrook" station. Too bad no one bothered to tell my pal Emily that she should have changed trains in New Haven if she was serious about getting to Wallingford.

7:00 P.M.—Eight hours after scheduled departure, five and a half after actual departure, we arrive at South Station, Boston. Like other intrepid travelers before me—Marco Polo, Gus Grissom, Gulliver—I bend to kiss the concrete of the loading platform and vow to publish my journal entries so that others may learn that AMTRAK's corporate office is in Washington, D. C., and that the name of its CEO is W. Graham Claytor, Jr. I've dropped him a friendly line, and if you were on the 11:06 to Boston with me, I hope you do, too.

Stephen Provizer writes from Cambridge, Massachusetts.

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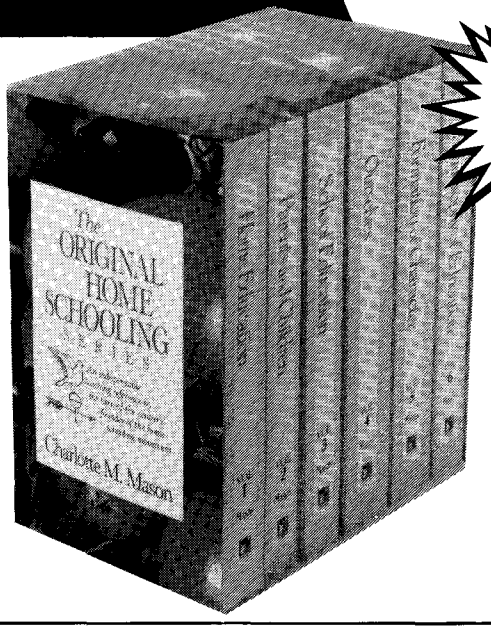

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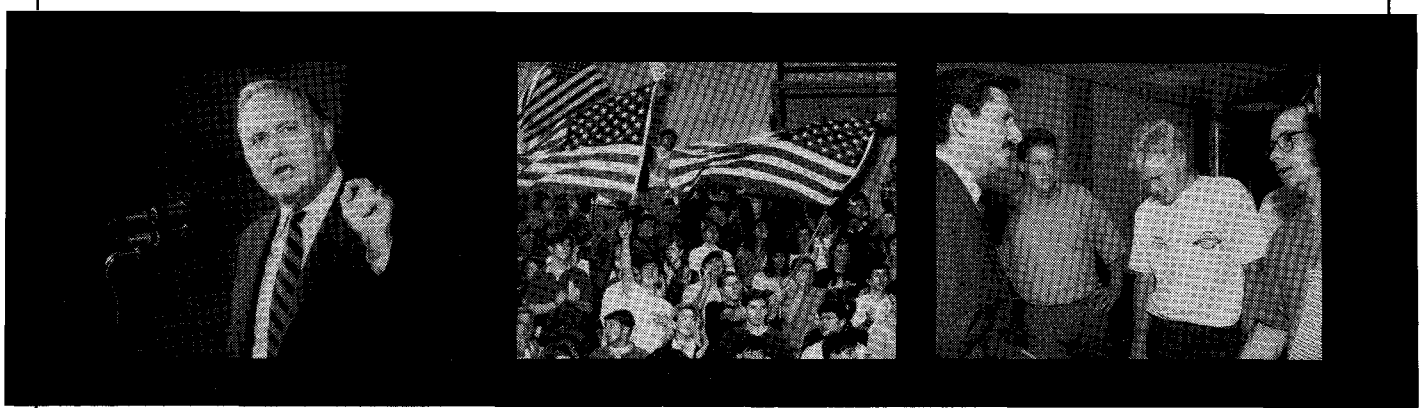

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